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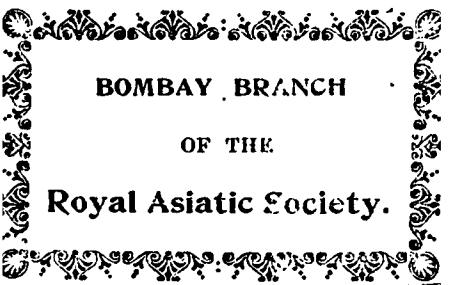

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English Worthies

EDITED BY ANDREW LANG

GEORGE CANNING

BY

FRANK H. HILL

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PREFACE.

THE materials of a Life of Canning are scattered over the newspapers of the period which it covers, Hansard and the 'Annual Register,' the Parliamentary papers, and the memoirs and diaries of his contemporaries. Of formal biographies, the late Mr. Robert Bell's interesting 'Life of George Canning' contains a good deal of information, drawn from various sources, especially as regards his family history; but it is not always accurate, and the author writes rather as a man of letters than as a politician. The works of Mr. Augustus Stapleton, who was Canning's private secretary towards the close of his career—'Political Life of George Canning' and 'George Canning and his Times'—are rather political apologies than biographies, though they contain much valuable material, especially in the letters of Canning to Lord Boringdon, afterwards Earl of Morley. An anonymous work, 'Memoirs of the Right Hon. George Canning,' in two volumes, published in 1828, apparently as a bookseller's speculation to meet

an interest aroused by Canning's recent death, is a fairly executed compilation from his speeches and from the 'Annual Register.' The more important of Canning's speeches, many of them revised by himself, were collected in six volumes by Mr. Robert Therry, who prefixed to them a short biographical sketch.

It would be difficult to mention any political memoirs, diaries, or correspondence published during the past half century in which the name of Canning does not occur, and which do not incidentally throw light upon his character or on the impression made by him during his lifetime. Omitting ephemeral publications, and Mr. J. Frank Newton's pamphlet, 'The Early Days of George Canning,' the list would possibly begin with the 'Life of Sir James Mackintosh,' published in 1835, and would for the moment end with Mr. Hodder's 'Life of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.' It includes, with others, the 'Diaries and the Letters to his Family of the first Earl of Malmesbury,' the 'Life and Letters of William Wilberforce,' Lord Stanhope's 'Life of Pitt,' and Lord John Russell's 'Memorials' and 'Life of C. J. Fox;' Mr. Edmund Phipps's 'Memoir of Robert Plume Ward;' the 'Diaries and Correspondence of George Rose;' Mr. Horace Twiss's 'Life of Lord Eldon;' the 'Diaries and Correspondence of Lord Colchester;' the Duke of Buckingham's 'Memoirs of the Courts and Cabinets of George III., the Prince Regent, and George IV.;' the 'Wellington Despatches;' Mr.

Pearce's 'Memoirs of the Marquis Wellesley;' Dean Pellew's 'Life of Viscount Sidmouth;' Mr. Spencer Walpole's 'Life of Spencer Perceval;' Mr. C. D. Yonge's 'Life of the Second Earl of Liverpool;' the 'Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly;' Sir Denis Le Marchant's 'Life of Viscount Althorp;' Lord Brougham's 'Life and Times' by himself; the 'Journals and Correspondence of Lord Auckland;' Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott;' the political writings of Cobbett; the 'Memoirs of Sir W. Knighton;' the 'Works and Memoir of Hookham Frere;' the 'Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope;' General Grey's 'The Early Life and Opinions of Charles, Earl Grey;' Sydney Smith's 'Plymley Letters;' Sir A. Alison's 'Memoirs of Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart, Marquises of Londonderry;' M. Marcellus's 'Politique de la Restauration;' the Journals of Charles Greville, and the Croker Papers.

It is curious to note in nearly all these writers and statesmen, of either party, a deep-seated dislike and distrust of Canning, or at best an adverse judgment of his conduct in the most notable controversies of his public life. Even the friendly feeling of Pitt, Malmesbury, and Wilberforce is qualified by misgiving. The only thorough exceptions—unless Mackintosh is to be included—are to be found, so far as I recollect, in the three men who after all knew him best—in Newton, Hookham Frere, and Stapleton. The chapter on 'The Canning Incident' in Lord Beaconsfield's biography of Lord

George Bentinck deals with Peel's conduct, and not with Canning's.

Estimates of Canning as a politician and orator will be found in Lord Brougham's 'Statesmen of the Reign of George III.,' where a much more favourable view of him is taken than that given in Brougham's letters published in his 'Life and Times;' in Lord Dalling's 'Historic Characters;' in Sir George Lewis's 'History of British Administrations,' and Mr. Kebbel's 'History of Toryism.' Among the writers of connected histories, Miss Martineau ('History of the Thirty Years' Peace') is the passionate eulogist of Canning; Sir Archibald Alison ('History of Europe') a fair, though unfavourable critic. Canning is the Wentworth of Mr. Plumer Ward's novel, 'De Vere,' and is drawn there in far more pleasing colours than those in which he appears in the same writer's 'Diaries.'

In stating Canning's opinions, as expressed by himself, I have endeavoured, even when the necessity of abridgment did not admit of quotation, to use, as far as possible, his own phrases. I have quoted freely from the squibs and lampoons represented in 'The Spirit of the Public Journals,' not because of the intrinsic value of these productions, but because, with Wolcot's poems and Canning's own, they illustrate the temper of the time, and the moral and political atmosphere which he breathed.

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GEORGE CANNING.

CHAPTER I.

THE CANNING FAMILY.

GEORGE CANNING, who died in 1827, Prime Minister of England, was born in London on April 11, 1770. In a letter to Sir Walter Scott, consciously or unconsciously parodying a remark of Steele's, he described himself as an Irishman accidentally born in London. His immediate ancestors would doubtless have described themselves as Englishmen accidentally born in Ireland. The Canning family had originally been settled at Bishop's Canynge, in Wiltshire, a village the name of which seems to indicate the lay appropriation of an ecclesiastical estate. There they remained until the reign of Henry VII. From the earliest periods of English history the well-known couplet of Pope has expressed a division of family pursuits, if not of family characteristics:

> Boist'rous and rough, your first son is a squire,
> Your second a tradesman, meek and much a liar.

In the reign of Edward II. a scion of the Canning

stock transplanted himself from Wiltshire to Bristol, then perhaps the chief seat of English industry, and the natural outlet for the 'west countree' to the sea and the world beyond. The Cannings presently took and long maintained their place among the notables of Bristol. In the reign of Edward III. and Richard II. William Canning was six times mayor of Bristol, and represented it in successive Parliaments. Another William Canning, his grandson, was also mayor of Bristol, and figures in the Rowley forgeries of Chatterton. It was in a chest in St. Mary's Church, known as 'Mr. Canynge's cofre,' that 'the sleepless soul who perished in his pride' professed to have discovered the manuscripts to which he gave an air of antiquity by stamping them under his feet, putting them up the chimney, and smearing them with ochre. Another Canning migrated to London, becoming Lord Mayor, and receiving knighthood in 1486. A grandson of the elder brother of 'Rowley' Canning married the daughter of John Salmon and Eustatia his wife, the latter being the heiress of an old Warwickshire family, the Le Marshals of Foxcote. From him the Irish Cannings, and the statesman, are descended. In 1618, some time after the regular plantation of Ulster, James I. granted the manor of Garvagh, in the county Londonderry, to George Canning, youngest son of Richard Canning of Foxcote. It was Strafford's maxim in the subsequent reign that where 'plantations did not reach, defective title should extend.' The practice was no doubt older than the maxim. It was deemed prudent to 'line the disaffected Roman Catholic population with Protestant guards,' and for this purpose 'discoverers with eagle

eyes,' as the report of an Irish Parliament calls them, went about detecting or inventing flaws in title. George Canning of Garvagh appears to have acted as one of the agents of the Corporation of London, to whom the lands forfeited after the rebellion of Tyrone and O'Donnell were granted—a cession to which the county of Londonderry owes its formation and its name. His descendants had to fight for their estates. William, his son, was killed in the Great Irish Rebellion of Sir Phelim O'Neill. William's son George was attainted by the Irish Parliament in 1689, but the attainder was reversed and his estates were restored to him in 1691.

George Canning, the father of the statesman, was the eldest son of Stratford Canning of Garvagh, the first bearer of those names afterwards celebrated. His grandmother was the daughter of Robert Stratford of Baltinglass. George Canning having formed an attachment which his parents disapproved, betook himself, on an allowance of 150*l.* a year, to London. The lady seems to have been his Rosaline, and not his Juliet, for he did not marry her. George Canning read for the bar and was called to it, became a small poet and a political pamphleteer, frequented Dodsley's shop, married, had children, set up as a wine merchant, found it impossible to live, and died. He was the author of a poetic 'Epistle from William Lord Russell to William Lord Cavendish,' in which the doctrines of the Whigs of the Revolution are set forth, for the benefit of George III. and Bute, and of an English 'Version of the First Three Books of the Anti-Lucretius of Cardinal Polignac,' a Latin poem

which, refuting the doctrines of Epicurus by those of Descartes, was extravagantly praised by Voltaire. The ethics of translation were not then understood as they are now, and Canning takes credit to himself for having corrected the political opinions of his author, making the Italian cardinal speak the language of a patriotic Englishman. An attack upon this book in the 'Critical Review' led Canning into a fierce controversy with Smollett, whom he suspected of being his assailant, anticipating the feud of English bards and Scotch reviewers, and possibly with as little reason for his suspicion as Lord Byron had for his. The elder George Canning was the author also of 'A Letter to Lord Hillsborough on the Connection between Great Britain and the American Colonies,' defending the policy of the Government on the principles laid down by Dr. Johnson in his pamphlet, 'Taxation no Tyranny.' Lord Hillsborough was President of the Board of Trade and Plantations, and the letter was naturally enough addressed to him; an additional reason may perhaps be found in the fact that, like Canning himself, Lord Hillsborough was an Irishman and an Ulster man. If any hope of advancement was entertained by the author, it seems to have been disappointed. The elder Canning published a collected edition of his poetic works, including a further translation of the fourth and fifth books of the 'Anti-Lucretius,' and a prefatory address to his friend and teacher, Seth Thompson, D.D., in which he reviews his position:

> How have I fall'n beneath fell Fortune's frown!
> How seen my vessel founder in the deep,
> Her ablest pilot, Prudence, laid to sleep!

But hence Despondence ! hell-born hag, away !
Oft lowers the morn when radiance gilds the day.
Hard if all hope were dead, all spirit gone,
And every prospect closed at thirty-one !
Then welcome Law ! poor Poesy, farewell !
Though in thy cave the loves and graces dwell,
One chancery cause in solid worth outweighs
Dryden's strong sense and Pope's harmonious lays.

Unfortunately the one Chancery cause seems to have been as little within Canning's reach as Dryden's sense or Pope's harmony. By way of committing the guidance of his vessel to her ablest pilot, Prudence, Canning married in May 1768, a year after he had published this farewell to poesy, a portionless young lady, Miss Mary Annie Costello, then resident with her grandfather, Sir Guy Dickens, in Wigmore Street. This Sir Guy Dickens appears to be the Colonel Guy Dickens who enters an appearance, off and on, in Carlyle's 'Life of Frederick the Great.' He was Secretary to the British Legation at Berlin at the time of the double-marriage negotiations, and he had a good deal to do with the domestic and political troubles of the time, with the escapades of the Crown Prince, and the intrigues which led to his attempt to get to England, his imprisonment, and the execution of the unhappy Katte. Carlyle seems to have taken a liking for Guy Dickens, describing him as a 'brisk, handy military man,' 'clear, ingenuous, ingenious,' 'with eyes brisk enough, and lips well shut.' Except in the last characteristic, some trace of the statesman may be found in these qualities. Canning, after his marriage, had got deeply into debt. The family consented to pay his

debts on condition of his consenting to cut off the entail of the estates, which were then settled upon his younger brother Paul, whose descendants owe the baronage of Garvagh, in the Irish peerage, to the son of the disinherited head of their family. The third brother, Stratford, was the father of Sir Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

The abilities of the elder George Canning seem to have been just enough to tempt him into literature and politics, and not enough to win success in either. The time of his residence in London, from 1757–71, was not unfavourable to a literary adventurer. The age of newspapers and reviews and magazines was beginning. Political pamphleteering had received a new development. The booksellers were on the look-out for recruits. It was the period of Johnson's pamphlets, and Churchill's satires, and Junius's letters, of Smollett and of Wilkes, of the 'Briton' and of the 'North Briton,' of the 'Monthly Review' and of the 'Critical Review.' A political partisan who could strike hard, quick and home, whose pen was sharply pointed, and dipped in ink that was made of gall, might have made his mark, and earned a daily dinner and an ultimate pension. But the elder George Canning had not the intellectual qualifications, nor perhaps the moral disqualifications, for this rough conflict. He hung about among the people who met at Dodsley, the footman-poet and bookseller's, and at his successor's, but he was rather in than of their set. In trade the elder Canning did not prove more successful than he had been in poetry, pamphleteering, and law. The despondence which he had defied at thirty-one overpowered him at

thirty-five. On April 11, 1771, he gave up the struggle for existence. He was buried in the graveyard of the church in Marylebone in which he had been married. On his tomb the following inscription, said to have been written by his wife, was placed:—

> Thy virtues and my woe no words can tell ;
> Therefore, a little while, my George, farewell.
> For faith and love like ours Heaven has in store
> Its last best gift—to meet and part no more.

CHAPTER II.

BOYHOOD AND SCHOOLDAYS.

GEORGE CANNING the elder died just a year to the day after his son's birth. A daughter born a year before had lived only a few months. The family of Garvagh had put a private interpretation on the Scripture about visiting the widow and orphan in their affliction, and withdrew from them the allowance of 150*l.* a year which they had granted to the disinherited eldest son. How the two years following the death of the elder George Canning were spent by his widow does not appear to be on record. In 1773 the usual resource of the impoverished British female possessing youth, good looks, ability, and energy presented itself to the mind of Mrs. Canning. She bethought herself of the stage. According to Mr. Bell, Mrs. Canning owed her chance of making her first appearance to the kind intervention of Queen Charlotte. Garrick, who was manager of Drury Lane, was officially His Majesty's servant; he was eager to be socially Her Majesty's servant also, and at her suggestion an engagement was offered to Mrs. Canning. Mr. Bell conjectures that the good offices of Mrs. Canning's uncle, Mr. Gustavus Guy Dickens, one of the grooms of the Queen's chamber,

and of Lord Harcourt were employed. But Mrs. Canning appeared on the stage in 1773, and neither Mr. Guy Dickens nor Lord Harcourt held court appointments at that date.

Mrs. Canning essayed, on November 6, 1773, the part of Jane Shore in the play of that name, Garrick himself resuming that of Hastings, while the good-for-nothing Reddish, who was afterwards Mrs. Canning's second husband, took the part of Dumont. She seems to have had that sort of success which is known as 'success of esteem,' and which consists of a cold approval or absence of disapproval. Bernard, the provincial manager, of whose company at Plymouth and elsewhere she was afterwards a member, and who was present at the performance, says, 'She put forth claims to the approbation of the critical.' But the approbation of the critical, though it may intrinsically outweigh the plaudits of a whole pitful of others, does not fill the treasury. Mrs. Canning repeated the part of Jane Shore the following evening, and altogether appeared in it six times. But when the difficulty of coming out had been overcome, the still greater difficulty of keeping out had to be encountered. Mrs. Canning retired into the background of the stage until she faded from Drury Lane altogether. Her subsequent theatrical career was almost entirely, if not entirely, confined to what, in its theatrical sense, there can be, we imagine, no objection to calling 'the provinces.' Its course is a little confused by her marriage with the actor Reddish, a polygamic person, whose name was borne, not merely in rapid succession but simultaneously, by a perfect troupe of theatrical ladies. In a letter to

Garrick, Miss Hannah More says of this very much and at the same time too little married person, who was then manager of the Bristol theatre, 'This is the second or third wife he has produced at Bristol. In a short time we have had a whole bunch of Reddishes, all of them remarkably unpungent.'

The audience, wisely discriminating between the provinces of art and morality, used to pelt Reddish in his personal character when he first appeared, in one instance, as Hannah More records, protracting this operation for a quarter of an hour. Then, having given expression to their injured moral susceptibilities, they allowed him to proceed with the counterfeit presentment with which he was charged for the evening. This man, who seems to have had more than the vices of the elder Kean without a spark of his genius, ultimately drank and debauched himself into a state of imbecility, and died in the York Asylum when Canning was fifteen years of age. Canning had, however, some years before been happily rescued from this dangerous guardianship. Moody, the actor, appealed on his behalf to his uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, who had become a man of note in the world of business and in the political society of London, but who seems, for whatever reason, to have left his struggling and unhappy elder brother to die unaided and unnoticed. Mr. Stratford Canning was at this time a member of the firm of French, Burroughs, and Canning, merchants and bankers. Moody called on him or wrote to him and told him that his nephew, though full of promise, was at present on the high road to the gallows.

Of this portion of his life Canning seems never to

have spoken, though he cannot have forgotten it. Perhaps it was among the things which are harder to recollect than to endure, for the reverse of Dante's saying is often true, and in happy days the recollection of bygone misery is the heaviest of griefs. It may be doubted whether Canning would, in any circumstances, have taken to the road indicated by Moody. His industry, self-restraint and prudent circumspection were as conspicuous throughout his career as his bold and brilliant genius. His course might have indeed been different. But for Moody, his name might have been joined with those of Garrick, Kemble, and Kean, and not with those of Chatham, Pitt, and Peel. Wilberforce, on the authority of a schoolfellow of Canning's, mentions the passion for theatricals which he displayed at Eton. As Addison was ransomed from the Church —the phrase is correct, for he was almost literally bought out of it—for service to the State by Lord Halifax, so Canning, through Moody's generous intervention, may have been redeemed from Drury Lane for St. Stephen's and Downing Street. An arrangement was made with the Garvagh family by which an estate of 200*l.* a year was settled upon the young Canning for his education and maintenance. He was sent in the first instance to Hyde Abbey, near Winchester, of which a certain Mr. Richards was the master. Mr. Richards seems to have been a hard flogger; Canning, however, was probably at Hyde Abbey School, as afterwards at Eton, the model good boy for whom birches and canes had no terrors. Here he gave promise of the qualities which he displayed later in life. He gained a prize for a poem on West's picture of the

resurrection of Lazarus, which forms the altar-piece of the cathedral of Winchester. Possibly but for Moody's intervention he might have emulated the achievements of Master Betty, for he is said, in acting the part of Orestes in an adaptation of Euripides, to have powerfully delineated—that is, as powerfully as was possible to an innocent child—the remorse of the matricide. He was more usefully employed in storing his memory with the language and images of Gray, the whole of whose English poems he learned by heart. Canning, at any rate, did not carry away from Hyde Abbey any animosity to Mr. Richards, or, if he did, it wore out in the course of time, for one of his first acts of ecclesiastical patronage was to bestow on his old master, who survived his pupil six years, a prebendal stall in Winchester Cathedral.

When Canning, then eleven years old, left Hyde Abbey for Eton in 1781, he was at once put into the lower fourth form. The Eton of George III.'s time bore a much closer resemblance to the Eton of Holy Henry's institution than to that of Queen Victoria. Prizes for modern languages, science masters, preparations for army examinations were unknown. It was as much a playground as a school. The games played were, as manuscripts published by Mr. Lyte in his 'History of Eton College' show, more numerous than the books read, and the nomenclature of the sports requires a scholarship of its own for its understanding. The majority of the boys played a good deal, were punished a good deal, and learned a little.

Red-letter days, founders' days, and court days

threw the machinery of instruction periodically out of gear. A whole holiday on one day, a half-holiday on another, and a play at four on the third, made havoc of time. Greek and Latin extracts, Latin verse, a smattering of geography and mathematics, the Church Catechism, and 'The Whole Duty of Man' formed the school course. For voluntary and private study in the leisure hours the boys of the fifth and sixth forms were commended to Dr. Middleton's 'Cicero,' Tully's 'Offices,' Ovid's 'Long and Short Verses,' 'Spectator,' &c., Milton, Pope, 'Roman History,' Porter's 'Antiquities,' and Kennet's 'Antiquities,' and all other books necessary to make a complete scholar. The '&c.' and 'all other books' enlarge at pleasure the range of the somewhat narrow selection, but being of private interpretation they do not form a very rigid injunction to individual study.

The provost and the head-master of Eton in Canning's time suited the place as it then was. The provost was the Rev. William Hayward Roberts, known as 'Double Gloucester' from the county that had given him birth and the good living which had given him corpulence. Miss Burney describes him as 'very fat, with a large paunch and gouty legs, good-natured, loquacious, gay, civil and parading.' Elsewhere she notes him as 'a goodly priest, fat, jovial, breathing plenty, ease and good living.' He had paid at one period of his life the usual debt of scholarship to the booksellers in a poem entitled 'Judah Restored,' and a treatise on the 'Errors of the English Version of the Old Testament.' The head-master of Eton was Dr. Jonathan Davies, who afterwards succeeded Roberts as provost. Davies had

been tutor to the Marquis Wellesley, to whom he always showed, as Wellesley gratefully acknowledged, the solicitude and affection of a kind parent. According to Hookham Frere, 'Davies was the very incarnation of authority. We boys never dreamed of his condescending to any other physical exercise than that of flogging us.' He was a king of boys, and his subjects jealously scrutinised his demeanour in his relations with other royal personages. 'He used,' Frere says, 'to be watched by the boys when George III. came over to Eton, to see that he did not play the courtier too much, and very well he managed it.' Davies was given to the pleasures of the table, including table-talk, and in his later days, at least when he was provost, found London more attractive than Eton. 'Sooner,' says the author of 'Pursuits of Literature,' seeking to find an image for the impossible—

> Sooner stentorian Davies cease to talk,
> And for his Eton quit his Bond Street walk.

He was on terms of intimate conviviality with the Prince of Wales, towards whom he seems to have exhibited the equality of a boon companion, as he exhibited the equality of a potentate with George III. The Prince, when they were dining together, had ventured to mention Homer. This was more than a provost and an ex-head-master could endure. 'What do you know about Homer?' retorted Davies, whose feasting had been Homeric. 'I bet you don't know a line of the poet.' The Prince took the bet and retorted with the line (Il. i. 225):

> Οἰνοβαρὲς, κυνὸς ὄμματ' ἔχων, κραδίην δ' ἐλάφοιο.

If not true, well invented. It is what the prince might have said.

The tribute paid by Wellesley to Davies makes it possible that his scholarship and deportment may have gone for something in the training of Canning, but the truth seems to be that Canning was always rather a master among the boys than a boy under the masters. An entry in Wilberforce's Diary says: 'C—— knew Canning well at Eton. He never played at any game with the other boys; fond of acting, decent and moral.' The fact that, though without distinction in the playing fields, and taking no part in the sports of the schools, he was not considered a 'miss' or a 'muff,' shows how strong was the ascendency of his genius and character. He was never in any scrapes. Though he had learned Gray by heart, he was not, while at Eton at least, one of 'those bold adventurers who disdain the limits of their little reign,' nor 'snatched a fearful joy' in the sense of being out of bounds. There is no evidence that he ever 'delighted to cleave with pliant arm the glassy wave,' or 'enthralled' proleptically 'the captive linnet,' nor ever 'chased the rolling circle's speed or urged the flying ball.' He 'sapped like Gladstone,' but did not 'fight like Spring.' He pursued the course of private reading necessary to make him 'the complete scholar,' especially familiarising himself with the 'Spectator,' &c. Verses of his are in the 'Musæ Etonenses.' He took part in the Debating Society, in which a regular speaker, a treasury bench, ministers, opposition, right honourable and honourable gentlemen, and noble lords figured. He helped to set on foot the 'Microcosm,' and wrote the best articles in it. Eton

was to him the 'Microcosm' of the world which he was about to enter, and he rehearsed in it the part he aspired to and was destined to play in the greater world beyond. Among his schoolfellows were those who would afterwards be his allies or antagonists in literature and public life. First among them was Hookham Frere, who, though by a year his elder, vowed to him a passionate devotion which grew stronger through nearly half a century, until Canning's death. Frere was his associate in the 'Microcosm' and the 'Anti-Jacobin;' his successor in the Under Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs in Pitt's first Administration; his minister, during Canning's first Foreign Secretaryship, at Madrid. Speaking in old age to his nephew and biographer, Frere said: 'I think, twenty years ago, Canning's death would have caused mine; as it is, the time seems so short, I do not feel it as I otherwise should.' Canning was already regarded by masters and boys as having the future and the world at his disposal to do what he liked with. Next to him, Frere said, 'Bobus' Smith, the brother of Sydney, was deemed sure to distinguish himself. In spite of his deplorable Whig connections, great things were looked for from Lambton; but the greatest thing which came of him was his son, the first Earl of Durham. Of Mornington, afterwards Marquis Wellesley—who belonged, however, to an earlier Eton generation—though the boys thought well of him, little was expected by the masters, in spite of his Latin verses, in comparison with 'Bobus' Smith and Lambton.

CHAPTER III.

THE 'MICROCOSM.'

THE 'Microcosm,' which still holds its place among the curiosities of schoolboy literature, and has several times been reprinted, was started on November 6, 1786, when Canning was sixteen years of age. It was published in Windsor once a week, price twopence. It appeared under the pseudonymous editorship of Mr. Gregory Griffin, who was its Isaac Bickerstaff, its Sylvanus Urban, its Christopher North, its Oliver Yorke. Its real editor appeared to have been James Smith, the brother of Bobus—it need scarcely be said not of Horace—and among its contributors were, besides Canning and the editor, Bobus Smith, Hookham Frere, and Lord Henry Spencer. It lasted through forty numbers, extending over nearly two years, expiring when James Smith left Eton. The copyright was sold for fifty guineas to Mr. Charles Knight, of Windsor, the father of the better-known publisher of that name, and the document which records the transfer bears the signature of Canning.

The 'Microcosm' is the work of boys in tail-coats and stuck-up collars—boys in the garb of men—and produces the sort of effect on the reader which the acting of a play by one of those aieries of children, of

which Shakespeare, all the manager swelling in his soul, bitterly complains must have produced on the theatre-goers of that day. The reflections are for the most part the insincere anticipation at fifteen or sixteen of the commonplaces which become truths of conviction and experience at fifty or sixty. There is no trace in the 'Microcosm' of those passions which inspired the Eton boy as he is described in the opening pages of 'Coningsby': 'In that young bosom what burning love, what intense ambition, what avarice, what lust of power, envy that fiends might emulate, hate that men might fear!' The difference is obvious between the youth of a period nourished on the 'Spectator, &c.,' and the youth of a period nourished on 'Childe Harold,' 'Manfred,' and the 'Corsair.' Among Canning's contributions, which are distinguished by the letter 'B,' is a sarcastic epistle from Mr. Gregory Griffin, acknowledging with gratitude his obligations to the gentlemen who are kind enough to assume responsibility for his writings, but requesting them to settle among themselves, and inform him who is the author of what, so that there may be no confusion, and his bookseller may have proper directions if called upon to enforce their respective claims. The reverence of the Microcosmists for the 'Spectator, &c.,' did not prevent Canning from writing a parody—perhaps the cleverest thing in the magazine—on Addison's celebrated criticism of 'Chevy Chase,' in the form of a review of an epic poem, entitled the 'Queen of Hearts,' representing the theft, detection, and punishment by the king of the knave of hearts, who had purloined and carried off certain tarts manufactured by the royal hands of his consort. A 'Poem

on the Slavery of Greece,' full of generous sentiment, does not rise much above the level of his unfortunate father's compositions. Canning's poetical genius lay in the mocking and not in the heroic vein, and he was seldom kindled with anything more ardent than the artificial fires of rhetoric. To the second number of the 'Microcosm' Canning contributed a paper on the 'Art of Swearing,' ridiculing the profane habits of speech common at that time, and incidentally satirising the mania for foreigners. Whether or not virtue can be taught, swearing surely can. Some person, having first un-Englished his name, calling himself Pedro if he be Peters, Nicolini if he be Nicholls, Girardot if he be Gerard, might, he suggests, issue a 'Complete Oath-Register, or Every Man his own Swearer,' containing oaths and imprecations for all purposes and occasions. There were also to be sentimental oaths for ladies, who might object to the good mouth-filling oath that Hotspur recommended to his wife. The idea of this paper was probably derived from Bob Acres' new method of sentimental or referential swearing introduced to the world twelve years before by Sheridan. The writer also proposes to draw up a list of execrations suitable to the year 1786. In the seventh number, Canning, in the character of an Eton boy, describes his sufferings as a visitor to a supposititious uncle who cruelly proposes examination into his attainments by the parson of the parish, and who makes unkind jokes about orchard robbing, the mutton of the Eton dinner-tables, and the necessity for providing cushions for what Sheridan, in reference to Pitt, once called the sitting part of a lad supposed to bear in his person the

marks and sting of the rod. Commenting upon this letter in the person of Mr. Gregory Griffin, Canning proposes to make application to Parliament for permission to open a licensed warehouse for wit, and for a patent entitling the grantee to the sole vending and uttering of wares of this sort for a given term of years. 'For this purpose,' he says, 'I have already laid in jokes, jests, witticisms, morceaus, and bons mots of every kind. . . . I have epigrams that want nothing but the sting. Impromptus will be got ready at a week's notice.' In the shape of a letter from a certain Mr. Homespun, written in indignant protest against the ill-natured prejudices of which weavers and tailors are the subjects, Canning banteringly insists on the analogy between the arts of weaving and of poetry as shown in the language common to both. Making a curious application of the Protectionist principle, he proposes that literary metaphors shall in future be drawn exclusively from branches of native industry. In another paper Canning weighs the better morality and inferior art of Sir Charles Grandison against the better art and more doubtful morality of Tom Jones. A maturer judgment would perhaps have seen less to blame in the naked and honest grossness of Fielding than in the Puritanic prurience of Richardson. Another essay gives a mock preference to Newbery's books over the novels of the day. The adventures of Mr. Thomas Thumb and Mr. John Hucklethrift are commented on, and, by the aid of parallel passages from Homer, a correspondence is established between the characters of Hucklethrift and Achilles, of Thumb and Ulysses. A letter from 'Nobody' is based on a play of words as

old as the Οὖτις of the Odyssey. 'Nobody' develops the relations in which he stands to his kinsmen 'Everybody,' 'Somebody,' 'Anybody,' 'What's his name,' 'Thing'um Bob,' &c. Everybody is endeavouring to be Somebody; no one is satisfied to be Nobody, who is made the subject of injurious and defamatory statements, such as 'Nobody is more wicked ——.' In the thirty-ninth number of the 'Microcosm,' Mr. Griffin gives an account of his life, now drawing to a close, and grows weaker in the process of telling it. A proposal is made for the publication of a selection ot Griffiniana. As an illustration of the quick wit of this illustrious man, and of a readiness of repartee which the recorder and subject of Mr. Burnand's 'Happy Thoughts' might have envied, the following anecdote is narrated. One day, being accosted by a friend who saluted him with the remark, 'How do you do, Mr. Griffin?' he replied, without the smallest hesitation, 'Pretty well, I thank you, sir. I hope you are well.'

The preceding outline will convey some idea of the character of the 'Microcosm,' and especially of Canning's contributions to it. They show his facility in using the materials which his time of life, his powers of mind, and his reading had given him. The magazine gave an early notoriety to its authors. Fanny Burney, nominally one of the dressers, really to a great extent one of the readers, of Queen Charlotte, and always a strong Canningite, brought several of the numbers of the magazine under the notice of her royal mistress. Mentioning in her diary a visit of the King and Queen to Eton in 1787, she says: 'The speeches were chiefly Latin and Greek, three or four in English. Some were

pronounced extremely well, especially those spoken by the chief composers of the "Microcosm," Canning and Smith.' Canning occupied the post of honour in delivering what appears to have been the final speech at Eton in 1787.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST CHURCH.

On leaving Eton, Canning entered himself as a student at Lincoln's Inn. 'George Canning, gentleman, only son of George Canning, Esq., of Middle Temple, deceased,' was 'admitted June 27, 1787.' Later in the same year, Canning went to Christ Church, Oxford, then presided over by a very notable person, Dean Cyril Jackson. Dr. Jackson was one of those men who make history by helping to make the men who form it. Without playing a part in the drama himself, he was behind the scenes prompting the actors and directing the stage management. Christ Church at the end of the eighteenth century was in some degree what Balliol became since, and the Dean discharged something of the honorary functions in relation to society which the Master once exercised. Jackson was the director of the youthful nobility and gentry who were destined to a political career. He had kept a diary of his own life and times, which, however, he destroyed. Probably, if it had been preserved and printed, much light would have been thrown on some of the darker and more secret passages of the political history of his day. As it is, the Dean is only to be traced by the allusions to him which crop up in

the memoirs and correspondence, and in the society novels of the period. Dean Cyril Jackson is the President Herbert of Robert Plumer Ward's once celebrated story of 'De Vere.' The President is described as at once a man of thought and of the world, in whom a look of command and the penetrating glance of a pair of keen though small black eyes were softened by the most polished courtesy. A certain air of superiority and protection, and a little pomp of manner, were set off by a stately figure clad in the silk cassock and hat of the ecclesiastical dignitary.

In 1771 Mr. Cyril Jackson, who had not yet taken orders, became sub-preceptor to the Prince of Wales and to his brother Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburg and Duke of York, then lads of nine and eight years of age respectively. He resigned this post in 1776 in resentment, gossip said, at the interference of the King with the education of his sons. He always maintained friendly relations with his royal pupils. He was in succession preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and Canon, and finally, Dean of Christ Church. He was content to be the clearer but lesser light at which the more glowing or smoky torches destined to illume the world, or to set it on fire, were kindled. Literary ambition he had none, or, if he had, literary fastidiousness killed it. The only record of him which is to be found in that monument of the vanity and glory of literature, the catalogue of the British Museum, is a solitary entry under his name. It calls attention to a volume without a title-page containing the text, with Latin notes, of the first book of Herodotus. The book has on the fly-leaf the following manuscript statement, signed 'H. Cotton':—'This

volume contains a specimen of an edition of Herodotus, designed by Dr. Cyril Jackson, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, commenced under his superintendence by the Rev. John Stokes, of Christ Church. It was executed in the Clarendon Press in Oxford. No more than this first book was printed, and this even was suppressed before publication, title-page,' &c. His Greek scholarship is said to have shown itself in the nicety of his appreciation of each word in an author, and in his understanding of the transitions of meaning which phrases and terms have undergone. His regard for the precise and idiomatic rendering of the force of the particles in Homer survives in the tradition of his translation of Τρῶες ῥα—'The Trojans, God help them.'

Dean Cyril Jackson was in the habit of entertaining at dinner every day six or eight of the members of his college whose faculties and peculiar bent it was his aim to correct or confirm in conversation. He occupied every Long Vacation in a home tour, taking some young friend with him as a companion, whose expenses he bore, visiting interesting objects and places of industry, avoiding only the great houses from which, if he entered them as a guest, it would be difficult for him to escape. He conversed with everybody he could meet, of whatever rank or pursuit, and is said to have had a greater knowledge of the social and economic condition of England than almost any man of his time. His home tours formed the subject of his conversations with his young guests when he returned to Christ Church, and he was able by his own experience to direct their vacation rambles properly, advising them what to see or bringing out the value of what they had seen. He

made himself acquainted with the individual character of the young men for whom he had a regard, and, as will be seen, took a very special interest in Canning's future. Dean Jackson restricted himself to his college work, and did not take part in the more general business of the University. He was never Vice-Chancellor, or anything but Dean of Christ Church. During the twenty-six years of his Headship, from 1783–1809, he counted among his pupils an unusual proportion of those who afterwards filled the highest posts in the service of the State. But it was not merely in the equipment of the statesmen of the future that he influenced public affairs. He was busy in the intrigue for the removal of Addington from the Premiership in the years 1803–4, and was much consulted in political combinations and projects. The reaction which is not unusual from worldliness in its legitimate character—a dignified and useful worldliness—to kindly other worldliness came upon Dean Jackson. In 1809 he resigned the Deanery of Christ Church, declining a Bishopric, and sought an almost absolute retirement in the village of Feltham, in Sussex, where he gave himself up to the service of the poor.

Such was the man who ruled Christ Church when Canning entered it in 1787. Canning's associates in a state of pupilage were not less remarkable, and many of them were destined to be his associates in public life and in political literature. Among them were Robert Jenkinson, on his father's elevation to an earldom, Lord Hawkesbury, and finally, Earl of Liverpool; Lord Holland; Viscount Morpeth, afterwards the Earl of Carlisle; Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, after-

wards Earl Granville, the father of the living statesman of that name; Charles Ellis, through life Canning's more intimate friend and confidant, afterwards Lord Seaforth; Lord Boringdon, afterwards the Earl of Morley; Lord Henry Spencer, an Eton friend of Canning's, a Microcosmist, and a younger son of the Duke of Marlborough; Sir William Drummond, afterwards ambassador at Constantinople; Francis Goddard, who ultimately became Archdeacon of Lincoln; William Spencer, the fashionable drawing-room versifier; and Vansittart, during many years the inevitable Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, and afterwards Lord Bexley. Among his graver acquaintances was Dr. Jacob Bryant, the mythologist, then resident near Oxford.

In 1828, the year following Canning's death, Mr. John Frank Newton, who seems to have enjoyed much of his intimacy, published, in a pamphlet entitled 'Early Days of the Right Hon. George Canning,' an account of Canning's university life. He describes him as being at Christ Church much what Wilberforce's informant describes him at Eton. In his rooms at Peckwater, says Newton, he was always to be found with a pen or a book in his hand. He was indifferent to amusements, and took little exercise, not keeping a horse or even hiring one. Newton describes the Speaking Society, of which he as well as Canning was one of the six original members, the others being Jenkinson, Lord Henry Spencer, Drummond, and Goddard. In its constitution there was a whimsical blending of display and secrecy, a sort of ostentatious mystery. The members devised a uniform for themselves, the description of which recalls the uniform of the Pickwick Club.

'Sometimes,' Mr. Newton writes, 'we appeared at dinner in the hall dressed in our uniform, which was a brown coat of rather an uncommon shade, with velvet cuffs and collars. The buttons bore the initials of Demosthenes, Cicero, Pitt, and Fox. Thus habited, and much the object of notice to every passing observer, we pleased ourselves with the excessive curiosity which our dress excited. As secret were we as the grave on all that concerned our oratorical institution, and it would be difficult to give an idea of the anxiety evinced by our fellow-students to discover the meaning of the brown coat and velvet cuffs.' The members met in the rooms of one or other of them every Thursday. They debated on some prearranged subject. After the discussion was over, and before separating at night, a vote was taken, and the topic for the following Thursday was chosen. While Canning was the brilliant and vivacious orator of the society, Jenkinson, not less prefiguring the statesman at the university, was its sensible and well-informed member. Newton says of him that he was not only a first-rate scholar, but had more general knowledge than any of his contemporaries at Christ Church. His acquaintance with history and European politics was especially remarkable. The superiority of his attainments was not, however, offensively displayed, the conciliatory and benignant manner of the mature man already marking the youth. The club was broken up by the secession of Canning himself, as he explained in a letter to Newton dated Brighton, September 15, 1788, a year after its foundation. Newton had already left the University. 'That club, Newton,' he exclaims, in mock heroic vein, 'is no more! "And what

dread event, what sacrilegious hand?" you will exclaim. Newton, mine!' So long as the society was a secret one he was pleased to belong to it, and especially to try his strength with Jenkinson in anticipation of conflicts in the House of Commons, when Canning as a Whig might be brought into collision with Jenkinson as a Tory. But the Dean had spoken to Canning on the subject seriously, representing that the suspicion of parliamentary intentions would be injurious to him at the bar, and advising him to quit the society. The Dean only advised; if he had affected to interfere with authority nothing would have induced Canning to leave the society. But he saw the reasonableness of the Dean's view, and on his return after the Easter Vacation sent in his resignation through Lord Henry Spencer. 'The message which Lord Henry brought occasioned, as it were, a combustion, which ended in the moving of some very violent resolutions. Among others, I was summoned to the bar; of course refused to obey the summons. A deputation was then sent to interrogate me respecting the causes of my resignation, which, of course, I refused to reveal; and they were at last satisfied by my declaring that the reason of my resignation did not affect them collectively or individually.' The society suspended its meetings and abolished the uniform. 'This, it seems, was intended,' Canning adds, 'to punish me by carrying the face of a common and not a particular secession. It was not long, however, before the truth came out, and their nightly debates are again renewed; not undiscovered, but with less pomp, regularity, numbers and vociferation.'

CHAPTER V.

MENTAL TRAINING AND RECREATION.

THERE was no Oxford equivalent for the 'Microcosm' in Canning's time, but he did not allow his faculty of verse-making to be confined to competitions for prize poems. He was already a lion in society. The flattery of women was added to the favour of head-masters and of heads of houses, of the Microcosmic boys of Eton and the speaking young men of Christ Church. His college friendships introduced him to the town and country houses of great people, and his passage through them may be traced by verses in the ladies' albums and by poetic epistles after the fashion of the eighteenth century. As an Eton boy, part of his vacations had been spent at the house of his uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, whither the Whig leaders of the day resorted. He was a frequent visitor at Crewe Hall, the residence of the celebrated heroine of the Whig toast, 'Buff and Blue and Mrs. Crewe,' and repaid her hospitalities by jocularities in prose and verse. Mrs. Crewe had a theory that all nervous affections produce a craving appetite. Canning, through some sixty or seventy lines, pursues the idea, and points the moral thus to himself and to her:—

Dear Mrs. Crewe, this wondrous knowledge
I own I never gained at College ;
You are my tut'ress, would you quite
Confirm your wavering proselyte ?
I ask you this :— to show your sorrow
At my departure hence to-morrow,
Add to your dinner, for my sake,
A supernumerary steak.

To Mrs. Leigh, of Leigh Hall, who had presented him with a pair of shooting breeches, he says that in a wife he will

Ask not rank nor riches,
For worth like thine alone I pray,
Temper like thine, serene and gay,
And formed like thee to give away,
Not wear herself, the breeches !

A poetic epistle, written as from his friend Lord Boringdon to Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, tells how the heart of the supposititious writer, captured by Lady Elizabeth Spencer, has been

Scorched and burnt to tinder,
When talking to her at the winder.

He aspired

Proudly to bear the beauteous maid
To Saltram's venerable shade ;
Or, if she likes not woods of Saltram,
Why nothing's easier than to alter 'em.

But the lady became engaged to her cousin, William Spencer :—

How changed the scene, for now, my Granville,
Another match is on the anvil,

And I, a widowed dove, complain,
And find no refuge from my pain,
Save that of pitying Spencer's sister,
Who has lost a Lord and gained a Mister.

These things, and things like these, were but the effervescence of a mind in which there were deeper workings, the bubbles and eddies on the surface of a stream in which the current was strong and steady, but which seemed shallower than it was, because its clearness minimised its apparent depth according to the well-known law of visual measurement. Beneath his seeming frivolity and levity Canning was possessed through life by a serious and persistent purpose. He doubled the parts of the ant and the butterfly in the fable. Mr. Newton, who was a West Indian, says that during his Oxford years Canning was profoundly interested in the Slavery question, in which in after life, within the limits imposed on him by his prudence of temper and his party connection, he always took the side of humanity. Mr. Newton, when he was about to return to the West Indies, suggested that Canning should accompany him thither; but Canning had other plans. 'You must know,' he replied to his friends, 'that I am most shamefully ignorant of French! . . . By this time twelve months I intend to procure a smattering sufficient to call a coach or swear at a waiter, and then to put into execution a plan formed long ago in happier days, of going abroad with my three fellow-scribes, the Microcosmopolitans. . . . Our idea is not that of scampering through France and ranting in Paris, but a sober sort of thing—to go and settle for some months in some provincial town remarkable for

the salubrity of its climate, the respectability of its inhabitants, and the purity of its language; there to improve our constitutions by the first, to extend our acquaintance with men and manners by the second, and to qualify ourselves for a further extension of it by perfecting ourselves in the third.'

In what manner and with what companions Canning put this plan into execution, or whether it was put into execution at all, is not apparent. When Canning, in 1807, became Foreign Minister, his imputed ignorance of French was the subject of incessant newspaper gibes. He makes confession of his shortcomings at a period somewhat earlier. In a letter to Lord Boringdon, written in the beginning of the year 1800, he elaborately vindicates the use of English in diplomacy, which he had employed in the first note he ever drew up; 'but for that,' he adds, 'I claim no great thanks, as I could not have written it in French.'

The statute which introduced examinations for honours at Oxford belongs to 1800. In Canning's day the degree of Bachelor of Arts was probably obtained as easily as it had been in that of Lord Eldon, some twenty years before. When Mr. John Scott went up for his degree he was examined in Hebrew and History. One question was put to him in each subject. 'What is the Hebrew for the place of a skull?' 'Golgotha.' 'Who founded University College?' 'Alfred.' 'Very well, sir, you are competent for your degree.' Through whatever form or phantasm of examination the operation was conducted, Canning took his B.A. degree on June 22, 1791, proceeding to his Master's degree on July 6, 1794. While at Oxford he competed for and

failed in obtaining the prize for an English poem on the attractive theme of 'The Aboriginal Britons,' succumbing to a candidate afterwards known and afterwards forgotten as the Rev. Dr. Richards, probably from his name himself an aboriginal Briton. Canning's Latin poem, 'Iter ad Meccam, religionis causa susceptum,' won the prize, and was a remarkable *tour de force*. It was recited by its author on June 26, 1789, the day of commemoration, and through the confident graces, probably already a little theatrical, but not the less effective, of Canning's person and delivery, was applauded by a theatre full of auditors little competent to appreciate the elegant Latinity and the vivid imagery of the composition. According to Wolcot, who almost certainly lies, the poem owed a good deal to Dean Jackson's revision. He makes Pitt say:—

> For any borough I will bring my man in,
> From Greek-mouthed Belgrave to Lame-Latin Canning.

Greek-mouthed Belgrave, otherwise called Lord Poluphloisboio, was so named from having quoted the Greek of Homer in the House of Commons. 'Lame-Latin Canning' is thus annotated:—'His "Iter ad Meccam" for the University prize exhibited such proof of ideas and scholarship as put the poor Dean of Christ Church to the blush. The first effort was condemned to the flames though it obtained the prize, the second was a cobbled piece of work between Mr. Canning and somebody of Christ Church, which with difficulty passed muster.' 'Lame-Latin Canning' was the rhetorical antithesis to 'Greek-mouthed Belgrave'; and the note was probably devised to justify the epithet.

In the Homeric poems the arming of the heroes is described as fully as their battles, and the education of statesmen is their arming for battle. Whatever may be thought of its intrinsic and comparative merits, the older system of University training was suited to Canning's genius and to the career on which he was destined to enter. He left Oxford almost ignorant of French, absolutely ignorant of most of those things which the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and Popular Instructors of various kinds endeavoured a generation afterwards to place within the reach of the intelligent artisans of the day. Frere gives an account of a walk in the woods near Enfield which he took with Canning when they were both engaged in public life. Canning stopped by the bank of a pool to look at some curious creatures which he saw swimming about, and asked what they were. Frere told him they were called tadpoles, and in course of time they would become frogs. Canning was amazed. Mr. Frere moralises this theme, and points out to a world grown sceptical as to the sufficiency of the older learning, as presenting the exclusive method and topics of education, that here was a man who could govern nations and balance worlds, and who yet was not aware that tadpoles turned into frogs. He probably could have recited pages from the 'Battle of the Frogs and the Mice' and from 'The Frogs' of Aristophanes, but of the natural history of the creatures he knew less than the slouching rustic of the fields through which he passed. The 'modern side' had not come into existence in Canning's school and University days. Ignorance of this kind would, of course, be injurious and disgraceful now. It is not that

natural history or physical science in any of its forms has any especial relation to statesmanship. The Jesuit, Father Pineda, as he is quoted by Horace Walpole, asserted that Adam, in his paradisiacal condition, was master of all the sciences except politics, and Adam, though he was necessarily the first, was not the last man of science in whom this remarkable blending of general knowledge and particular ignorance is perceptible. The habit of precise reasoning from *à priori* truths, or from clearly ascertained facts, through irresistible deductions or crucial experiments, to positive conclusions, does not necessarily involve that delicate sense of the probable, and that tact in dealing with doubtful indications, which are the condition of civil prudence, or, in other words, statesmanship. But it is essential that a man taking part in affairs should possess the general culture and information of his age, that he should be familiar with the laws and theories which shape its conceptions, colour its language, and furnish its illustrations. If Canning lived now he would probably have known as much of Darwin as Mr. Gladstone or Lord Salisbury does. But whatever may be the true method of education in its relation to statesmanship, the special training which Eton and Oxford, Dr. Davies and Dean Cyril Jackson, afforded to Canning was admirably suited to his genius and to the career that lay before him. His great gift—a gift in which, perhaps, he has no rival in parliamentary history—was his mastery of the art of expression in written and spoken language. He possessed in an eminent degree the faculty of clear and epigrammatic statement, sentence by sentence, and of lucid order in the arrangement of the

greater passages of his speeches, which makes each part seem, not merely the best in itself, as it stands alone, but perfect in its contribution to a whole yet more perfect. Nature had armed him with a weapon keen and effective in no ordinary degree. His education and accomplishments pointed the barb and winged the shaft. A fertile fancy was nourished by the illustrations with which a large reading of the great writers of Greece, Rome, and England supplied it. A keen wit found the material for burlesque and parody in the precedents of history and the creations of poetry.

It is curious that, though Canning lived so much at Oxford, it never had that hold on his affections which Eton retained to the last. He was tired of it before he left it. A premature mannishness was common to him with Lord Beaconsfield. The young Disraeli was too impatient to mingle with the world, and take part in its affairs, to be able to endure the idea of years of University pupilage and tutelage. Vivian Grey, when it was proposed to him to go to Oxford, 'paced his chamber in an agitated spirit and panted for the Senate,' for 'to such an individual the idea of Oxford was an insult.' Canning, it would seem, also paced his chamber in an agitated spirit and panted for the Senate, in disgust with Oxford, but he wisely did so at Peckwater, and not in London, and after having put himself in the way of getting from Oxford all that it could give him. In a letter to Mr. Newton he says that Oxford is so completely uncongenial to him in mind and body that he dreads returning to it: 'Wallace is gone, Western is gone, Newton is gone, and why am I not gone? I expect, however, on my return a small cargo

of Etonians, which will in some measure comfort me for the emptiness and unamiableness of the generality of the good fellows of whom Christ Church can boast.'

The names of the three friends whose departure from Oxford Canning bewails illustrate the diverging paths of men whose starting-point is the same. Wallace, afterwards Lord Wallace, has an official and parliamentary association with the fiscal and commercial reforms of the first quarter of this century inferior only to that of Huskisson. Death extinguished the bright promise of Western. Poor Mr. Frank Newton, to whom we owe interesting glimpses of Canning in his University days, was speedily absorbed in a craze. He discovered—taking seriously the doctrine of a passage in Frere's 'Anti-Jacobin' poem on 'The Progress of Man'—that man, in becoming carnivorous, lost health and innocence. In 1811 he wrote the first part of a treatise, which never had a second, entitled, 'The Return to Nature; or, The Defence of the Vegetarian Regimen.' Ten years later he gave to the world a little volume entitled, 'Three Enigmas attempted to be Explained.' The three enigmas were (1) the Import of the Twelve Signs; (2) the Cause of Ovid's Banishment; (3) the Eleusinian Secret. These three enigmas are only one enigma, and the key to the enigma is vegetarianism. Ovid was banished because, in a passage of the 'Metamorphoses,' he had blundered, without knowing it, not having been initiated, on the Eleusinian secret, which is that the zodiacal signs are an allegorical presentation of the truth that man's proper food is bread and fruit.

CHAPTER VI.

IN LONDON—INTRODUCTION TO PITT.

THE young Disraeli declined Oxford for an attorney's office. The young Canning left Oxford with a view of finding at the bar fortune, independence, and so much of a career as would open parliamentary life to him. He came to London at the beginning of the year 1792. He had entered himself five years before as a student at Lincoln's Inn, but was never called to the bar; and there is no trace, as the Steward of the Inn has courteously ascertained for me, of his ever having kept any of his terms. In the last years of his life, when he was Prime Minister, he was, as a matter of compliment, called to the Bench of his Inn. He belonged to one or more debating societies—such as that in Old Bond Street, the 'Crown and Anchor,' or the 'Hardwicke.' Canning had left Eton, and he may have left Oxford, a Whig of the school of Fox and Sheridan. He had taken an active part as a schoolboy, in favour of Admiral Keppel against the Court candidate, in an election for Windsor; and it was as a Whig, or something more, that he had met Jenkinson in the debates of the Christ Church Speaking Club. Lord Holland said that at Oxford Canning was a furious Jacobin and a hater of the

aristocracy. The change in his political views, which was avowed within a few months after his coming to London, was perhaps in process of silent and gradual accomplishment under the courtly influence of Dean Cyril Jackson and the associations of Christ Church. A strange story is told by Sir Walter Scott as to the manner of Canning's conversion—a story which belongs as completely to the region of historical romance as any incident of the Waverley novels. In his diary, under the date of April 17, 1828, Scott writes: 'Canning's conversion from popular opinions was strangely brought about. When he was studying in the Temple, and rather entertaining revolutionary opinions, Godwin sent to say that he was coming to breakfast with him, to speak on a subject of the highest importance. Canning knew little of him, but received his visit and learned to his astonishment that, in expectation of a new order of things, the English Jacobins designed to place him, Canning, at the head of their revolution. He was much struck, and asked time to think what course he should take—and having thought the matter over, he went to Mr. Pitt and made the anti-Jacobin confession of faith.' Scott adds that Canning himself mentioned this to Sir W. Knighton on the occasion of his giving a place in the Charterhouse of some ten pounds a year to Godwin's brother. Godwin's application was made to the King through Knighton, and Canning's name does not appear in the correspondence in Knighton's 'Memoirs.' During his life the story was not brought up against him. Scott first records it in the year following Canning's death. The fable illustrates the growth of myth. A conspicuous phenomenon had to be accounted

for, namely, Canning's transfer of himself from the Whig or even revolutionary side to that of Toryism and reaction in English politics. The conflict within his own mind was dramatically represented in the shape of external agencies. In Godwin the revolution was personified, in Pitt the resistance; and they were figured as contending in person for the soul of Canning, as Satan and the archangel Michael in the Scriptural legend contended for the body of Moses. Canning represents, it might be said, the youth and the future of England—the young England of the close of the eighteenth century—and Godwin and Pitt the opposite forces, social and political, which struggled for the mastery over it, the victory remaining with resistance, as typified in Pitt. Canning's mind was at this time working itself free from its old associations and prepossessions. In a letter to Lord Boringdon, dated Paper Buildings, Temple, December 13, 1792, while reserving to himself freedom of judgment and action, he declares that if he were now in Parliament he should take the side of Mr. Pitt. He cannot agree with Fox about the French Revolution. He admits the full right of every nation to choose the institutions which it thinks best for itself, and avows a sort of speculative fondness for the idea of a representative republic, but the aggressive arrogance of the French and the tyranny which they seek to establish over Europe have opened his eyes. As usual, a change of view in regard to foreign politics affected his mental attitude in home questions. Seeing in the various popular associations of the day instruments for the propagation of French ideas, and in apparently innocent proposals of reform

the germ of revolution, he declares himself against them. The facts leave no place, chronological or moral, for the sharp alternative presented in the supposed interview with Godwin and Pitt and the sudden choice between them. Canning's letter was written towards the close of the year 1792. Godwin's 'Enquiry concerning Political Justice,' which made him first widely known, was not published till the year following, and, except as the author of that work, he did not represent revolutionary principles in England. The idea that Godwin, essentially a man of speculation and not of action, meditated a revolutionary outbreak, and that he invited a youthful law student to place himself at the head of the movement, is absurd. But it is not more credible than the supposition that Canning, made acquainted with these designs and asked to further them, should have kept them to himself, and that he should have gone on discoursing to his friend Lord Boringdon on the danger of the French principles without breathing a word as to the proposals made to him, thus becoming an accessory after the fact to seditious and treasonable designs.

The period which immediately preceded Canning's entry into public life may be considered, after that of Elizabeth, as the heroic age of English politics. It was the era of Chatham, in whom the national spirit was reborn. The old struggle with France had been fought out on three continents. The help given by Chatham to Frederick the Great raised Prussia to the rank of a great power, and began that movement of events which, more than a century later, called the German Empire into existence. The victory of Plassy

ensured that England, and not France, should hold the glorious East in fee, and that the European influences destined to recreate India should come from our race and country. Two years later Wolfe, on the heights of Abraham, decided that North America should be held by England, or by a republic of the English race. The work has stood in Europe, in Asia, and in America, in spite of the efforts of the two Napoleons to undo it; and the work was Chatham's. Frederick was the ally, Clive and Wolfe the instruments of his policy. His was the contriving head, theirs were the armed hands. At home Chatham no less embodied the national and popular spirit. England ceased to be the creature of the Whig families which had ruled it under the first two Georges, and a force was called into existence which alone was capable of defeating the monarchical system which George III. strove to erect on the ruins of the power of the great houses and to strengthen by the rupture of political connections. The English people became England. It is one of the contrasts which run through English and French history, that the greatness of England abroad, unlike the greatness of France, instead of overshadowing liberties at home, stimulated and expanded them. During the periods of her European preponderance, under Louis XIV. and the Napoleons, France has been abject and servile within her own borders. The victories by which Chatham made England the ruling power in Europe, Asia, and America were contemporary with the revival of the national life at home. The foundations of the industrial and commercial England of the present day were laid by the system of internal

water communication devised by Brindley, and by the inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright, and Watt. The source of the wealth of nations was expounded by Adam Smith almost simultaneously with the invention of these mechanical aids to its development. In political life the concession of the right of parliamentary reporting gave public opinion indirect but real control over public affairs. Parliamentary representation was indeed imperfect, but public meetings now first gave the nation the means of expressing its mind and purpose. The great English newspapers had their origin at the same time. The right of the constituencies to the free choice of their representatives was decided in the controversy of the House of Commons with Wilkes. The liberties of the subject received new guarantees in the judicial condemnation of general warrants and in the reversal of Wilkes's outlawry. The religious and philanthropic revival (as the names of the Wesleys and of Howard testify) was as remarkable as that of industry and politics. The younger Pitt's accession to office, with its peculiar circumstances, gave a mortal wound, though the thing did not at once die, to the principle of government by oligarchical combinations, and his enlightened fiscal and commercial policy raised the material prosperity of the country to the highest point. He meditated, as is well known, the complete abolition of all custom duties and the establishment of a system of absolute free trade, which we have not yet reached, and but for the French revolutionary war he might have accomplished his design. The national life was raised to its highest power when Canning entered Parliament. No one, it

might seem, could have a nobler stage or a nobler part to play than that which was opened to him.

A change for the worse was, however, impending. It is common to speak of the two Pitts, the elder and the younger—Chatham and the second son of Chatham; but practically there are three Pitts of whom history has to take account: (1) Chatham, (2) the William Pitt who was Prime Minister from 1783 to 1793, and (3) the William Pitt who was Prime Minister from 1793 to 1801, and again from 1804 to 1806. The two last, with ostensible personal identity, differed as much from each other as any rival statesmen have ever done. The Pitt of 1783 to 1793 was a sort of Cobden of the eighteenth century in office, the disciple of Adam Smith, the projector of a scheme of Free Trade more thorough than Peel or Gladstone has been able to bring about, the anticipator of Grey and Russell in the design at least of parliamentary reform—a cosmopolitan and international statesman in the good sense of the phrase, if ever there was one. The Pitt of 1793 to 1806 was simply the parody of his more illustrious father—a Chatham *manqué*; the man of peace dressed up in weapons of war; hiding in swollen Bombastes and Pistol phrases the consuming anxiety for peace which never left him till the eternal conflict ruined his health and broke his heart; giving by the dignity and ascendency of his personal character the semblance of success to measures which were but a series of energetic failures. This later and less glorious Pitt was the Pitt whom Canning elected to follow—the Pitt of decadence and apostacy, not the pilot who weathered the storm, but the mariner driven helplessly before it, and at best keeping afloat and

from the rocks the vessel which he could not bring into port.

At the time when Canning looked out from his chambers on the political world the war spirit and anti-French spirit were at their height. Canning fully shared them, and to him Pitt symbolised them. How Canning's acquaintance with Pitt began is not very clearly stated; but it did not require any great political research on the part of a Minister anxious to discern useful ability to discover Canning. Sheridan had already bragged about him in the House of Commons as the coming Whig hero. Towards the end of the session of 1792, when Jenkinson made his first speech on behalf of the Government, Sheridan could not refrain from saying that his own party was about to receive a great accession in the companion and friend of the young orator who had just distinguished himself. Canning had been an 'imp of fame' when he was a lad at Eton. Fox is said to have had his eye upon him as a parliamentary recruit even then. Canning, however, had refused a safe Whig seat which had been offered him by the Duke of Portland. He foresaw the impending Whig rupture; and, feeling himself drawn to Mr. Pitt, resolved, if he joined him, to do so by his own act, and not 'gregariously in a troop' of political deserters. His youthful friendships at Eton and Oxford had opened to him the world of society, which was then more exclusively than now the world of politics. His name and talents were probably as well known to Mr. Pitt as to Fox or Sheridan. At any rate, when Lord Hawkesbury, the father of Jenkinson, gave a dinner-party in order to bring Pitt and Canning

together, it was found that they had already made acquaintance. Hookham Frere, in his old age, fancied that he, through an anonymous lord, had been the means of making them known to each other. Lady Hester Stanhope describes the first meeting of Pitt and Canning. 'The first time,' she said, 'he (Mr. Canning) was introduced to Mr. Pitt, a great deal of prosing had been made beforehand of his talents, and when he had gone Mr. Pitt asked me what I thought of him. I said I did not like him; for his forehead was bad, his eyebrows were bad, he was ill made about the hips, but his teeth were evenly set, though he rarely showed them. I did not like his conversation. Mr. Canning heard of this, and sometime after, when upon a more familiar footing with me, said: "So, Lady Hester, you don't like me?" "No," said I, "they told me you were handsome, and I don't think you so."' Probably there was something of feminine jealousy in this aversion. She found in Canning a rival in the affections of her uncle, whom Lord Malmesbury speaks of as 'nursing him in the hothouse of his partiality and *engouement*, for it amounted to that.'

Canning's conversation with Pitt, however it was brought about, had its natural result. A place in Parliament was soon found for the young convert. Sir Richard Worsley resigned his seat for Newtown, in the Isle of Wight, and Mr. Canning presented himself to the electors with the *congé d'élire* which then scarcely implied more freedom of choice in political than it now does in ecclesiastical matters.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WHEN Canning entered the House of Commons in 1793 the chair was occupied by Mr. Addington, who in 1789 had succeeded Mr. (afterwards Lord) Grenville on the appointment of that statesman to a Secretaryship of State. He remained Speaker until he became Prime Minister in 1801. Canning ridiculed his airs and graces in the chair—

When with gait consequential and dignified pace
You were strutting behind little C——'s mace ;
When you moved to the chair
With so stately an air ;
When your looks were so solemn, important and dull,
When your gown was so ample, your wig was so full ;
With what rapture we owned, as the farce we surveyed,
That the Chair and the Speaker of one block were made.

Canning's contempt was inspired by a retrospective animosity. Supported by the immense authority of Pitt, Addington filled the chair respectably if not with distinction, and as the usage of those times permitted, he repaid Pitt's patronage by occasional aid in debate. On the Treasury Bench, at the right hand of the Speaker, the Cabinet was represented by Pitt himself,

by Dundas, who combined the offices of Secretary of State and Treasurer of the Navy, and by Windham, who, as a Portland Whig, had taken the post of Secretary at War. The House of Lords at that time, and long afterwards, had a preponderance amounting almost to a monopoly of Cabinet offices. George Rose and Charles Long were Secretaries of the Treasury, Jenkinson was one of the Commissioners of the India Board, and Huskisson was Under Secretary for the Colonies and War. Lord Mornington was a Junior Lord of the Treasury. The magisterial eloquence of Pitt commanded the House with an authority which probably no one before or since has ever exercised over it. He did not browbeat it like his father, nor show his power, as subsequent Ministers have done, by controlling the storms which they have raised. His authority was equal and constant. He was powerfully seconded by Dundas, probably as great a master of official and parliamentary business of all kinds and of businesslike speaking as the House has ever seen. His broad Scotch accent, ridiculed in 'The Rolliad' and in 'The Pursuits of Literature,' made his shrewdness seem yet more shrewd, and in spite of George III. he was as innocent of Scotch metaphysics as Joseph Hume himself. Windham, uniting the prejudices of a Squire Western with the chivalry of a Bayard and the paradoxical ingenuity of a Greek sophist, was probably as much of an embarrassment as an assistance. His brilliant wit and perverse originality were ornaments of debate, but discomfited his allies and colleagues as often as his antagonists. The subordinate Ministers were not capable of giving much aid. Huskisson, a clear thinker, was at that time and

for long after an embarrassed talker, and his ungainly manner and provincial accent displeased the eye and ear of the House. In Jenkinson, afterwards 'the pink-nosed Liverpool' of Cobbett, 'the arch mediocrity' of Disraeli, disorder and want of method seem to have been hereditary. Lady Hester Stanhope describes his father, the first Lord Liverpool, as always looking for documents which he could not find. 'He used to ram his hands into his pockets, first on one side and then on the other, searching for some paper just as if he were groping for an eel at the bottom of a pond.' George III. noticed in the son an absence of method and of a head for business. A disorderly fulness of information, an amplitude of ill-assorted knowledge, and a too modest and yielding temper, made Jenkinson ineffective. The animated rhetoric of Lord Mornington seemed to seek mental vivacity in vivacious gesture. George Rose had an easy murmuring talk and a mastery of usage and precedents. Charles Long, who afterwards bore the title of Lord Farnborough, worn for too short a time by the late Sir Thomas Erskine May, is described by Lord Brougham as 'the most experienced and correct observer of all the parliamentary men of his time.' Against this respectable array were ranged the stormy force of Fox, carrying away at once the convictions and feelings of his hearers in a tempest of reasoned passion; the manly dignity of Grey; the elaborate wit and the somewhat harlequin glitter of Sheridan; the easy colloquial sarcasm, the pointed argument and the business knowledge of Tierney; the courtly dignity and facile utterance of Burdett, most aristocratic of demagogues and most

simple-minded of charlatans; the generous eloquence of Erskine, which lost much, though not everything, in being transported from the Bar to Parliament; the somewhat pompous and egotistic but impressive good sense and integrity of Whitbread. It is not strange that Pitt should have sought a recruit in Canning, whose powers of continuous argument, illumined by wit and fancy, from the first gave promise of what he afterwards became, when the flippancy, occasionally verging on impertinence, and the scholarship, a little too pedantically displayed, of the Christ Church Speaking Club were in some degree softened down to the temper of an assembly of men of business.

Canning was not in a hurry to speak. He held his tongue during his first session, devoting himself to the study of the House, its ways and temper. He allowed expectation to gather. Fanny Burney indicates the impatience and disappointment with which this tardiness was regarded by Canning's eager friends, and the gratification with which his maiden speech, on January 31, 1794, was hailed. But while the hearers were delighted, the performer was undergoing alternations of bliss and torture. In a letter written some weeks later to Lord Boringdon (March 20) he says:—

I intended to have told you, at full length, what my feelings were at getting up, and being pointed at by the Speaker, and hearing my name called from all sides of the House; how I trembled lest I should hesitate or misplace a word in the two or three first sentences, while all was dead silence around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's; how in about ten minutes or less I got warmed in collision with Fox's argu-

ments, and did not even care twopence for anybody or anything; how I was roused in about half an hour from this pleasing state of self-sufficiency by accidentally casting my eyes towards the Opposition Bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of Opposition laughing (as I thought) and quizzing me; how this accident abashed me, and together with my being out of breath, rendered me incapable of uttering; how those who sat below me on the Treasury Bench, seeing what it was that distressed me, cheered loudly, and the House joined them; and how in less than a minute, straining every nerve in my body, and plucking up every bit of resolution in my heart, I went on more boldly than ever, and getting into a part of my subject that I liked, and having the House with me, got happily and triumphantly to the end.

Canning had not completed his twenty-fourth year when he made his first speech. The occasion of it was Mr. Pitt's motion for a subsidy to the King of Sardinia. Events had been moving fast. The session of 1793 had been a busy and exciting one. It witnessed Pitt's formal renunciation of the doctrine of Parliamentary Reform, of which twice before he had submitted large projects to the House. The Traitorous Correspondence Bill, and similar measures, suspended the guarantees of freedom in England. In France the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Committee of Public Safety were established. The two nations sacrificed their domestic liberties to reciprocal hate and fear.

In the course of the session 1794 Canning made two other speeches, which are not recorded with any minuteness in the 'Parliament Debates,' and which he did not print. One of them was on Major Maitland's

motion for an inquiry into the causes of the failure of the expedition to Dunkirk and on the evacuation of Toulon, and another in defence of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

He vindicated Pitt's abandonment of parliamentary reform against the attack of Mr. Grey on the ground of inopportuneness. Canning carried his new anti-Whig feeling so far as to view with distrust the admission into the Government of the Whig leaders who were under the influence of Burke—the Duke of Portland, Mr. Windham, Lord Spencer, and Lord Fitzwilliam, who, giving up the Lord Presidency, went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, and to whose recall next year the subsequent Irish troubles are in some degree traceable.

Parliament, after prorogation, met again on December 13, 1794. Mr. Canning was chosen to second the address in reply to the speech from the Throne. In March, 1795, Mr. Fox, in a speech of historic fame, moved for a Committee on the State of the Nation, and especially the condition of Ireland. Canning spoke in the debate, following Sheridan. An exaggerated air of mature sagacity marks Canning's earlier speeches. In a debating society manner he protests against introducing a debating society into the House of Commons. It is enough to note these youthful exercises.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

CANNING had entered Parliament with a view to office, and office was near at hand. After some delays and doubts, the nature and cause of which do not very explicitly appear, he was appointed, in the spring of 1796, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in succession to Mr. Thomas Aust, now known to mankind only as Canning's predecessor. Fox, who at this time had a very angry feeling towards Canning, which he expressed in his letters to Lord Holland, ungenerously attacked the appointment as a job substituting an incompetent for a competent person. Soon afterwards Canning accepted the post of Receiver-General of the Alienation Office, with a salary of 700*l.* a year —a sinecure the nominal duties of which were the reception of fines levied upon writs of covenants and entries.

In May, 1796, the approaching expiration of the septennial term brought about a dissolution of Parliament. Canning, leaving Newtown, offered himself as a candidate for Wendover; both boroughs were afterwards victims of the Reform Act of 1832. For Wendover he sat in conjunction with Mr. John Hiley Addington, destined to a place in human memory

as the cheering 'Brother Hiley' of one of Canning's anti-Addingtonian squibs. During the next two years Canning took little part in debate. He was absorbed in the work of his office, patiently bearing the detention in town and the seclusion from society which it involved, for which, he said, the happiness of constant occupation and the satisfaction of seeing a great deal of himself were more than a compensation. Next to this improving intercourse he valued his opportunities of being with Mr. Pitt, who, though not so close a prisoner as Canning, never left town without giving him a map of his movements. Canning saw much of him at Holwood, and never left him without a warmer love and admiration. 'I wonder,' Canning writes from the Foreign Office, 'what sort of times those must have been when there were no armies to watch, no conflicts to apprehend, and Europe had no fate depending.'

The life of Canning is essentially that of a politician, and to narrate fully his first thirteen years in Parliament and office would be to trace the course of history through the first Administration of Mr. Pitt, that of Addington, Pitt's second Administration, and that of Grenville and Fox. It is the history of unsuccessful war and equally unsuccessful negotiations with France; of coalitions and the rupture of coalitions; of the Directory, the First Consulate, and the Empire; of the 'experimental peace' of Amiens and of the renewal of the war. Canning's connection with these events is almost that of any other subordinate member of the Government —of Jenkinson or Huskisson. It was not until he became Foreign Minister in the Portland Administration of 1807 that he began to play an independent and original part

in public affairs. His intimate personal relations with Pitt and with Lord Malmesbury, the diplomatist of the Pitt Government, and his official connection with Lord Grenville, brought him into nearer view of the great events of the time than was possible to any other person not a member of the Cabinet; but the part he played was that of an instrument, and not of an agent, still less of a principal. He was very busy in the second negotiations for peace which were conducted by Lord Malmesbury at Lisle. There was a peace party and a war party in the Cabinet. Pitt was at the head of the former; Grenville, his Foreign Secretary, of the other. Malmesbury, nominally instructed by Grenville, was really directed by Pitt; and Canning in the Foreign Office, and George Ellis—Pitt's former assailant in 'The Rolliad,' but now his devoted follower—at Lisle were the subterranean channels of these secret communications. Pitt used the newspapers against Grenville, and Grenville forced a resolution of secrecy on the Cabinet, expressly intended, Canning says, to tie up Pitt's tongue. Probably Canning was the intermediary between Pitt and the press, for he was suspected of using his official position for stock-jobbing purposes, and he had to enforce a retractation from Mr. Perry, of the 'Morning Chronicle,' by the threat of an action for libel.

While Pitt and Grenville were at variance with each other, they conspired to keep the rest of their colleagues in the dark. Lord Malmesbury had to write a double set of despatches, one to mystify the Cabinet at large, the other to inform the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. Important despatches which could

not be kept back were so copied out as to be nearly illegible. Pitt and Malmesbury, through Canning and Ellis, adopted the device of 'most private letters,' of which Canning speaks as a most admirable invention, which he hopes will be kept up to the end of the negotiations for the purposes for which it was designed. In this private correspondence, Malmesbury, from his long white mane and fine eyes, was called 'The Old Lion;' Le Tourneur, one of the French negotiators, was 'Sir Gregory,' in honour, no doubt, of Sir Gregory Turner; Maret was 'William;' Talleyrand 'Edward.' Mysterious messengers from Lisle came to Spring Gardens, where Canning lived, found their way to the back of the house, stealthily passed the bow windows, roused Canning, and had conspiratorlike interviews with him in the garden. At Lisle Lord Malmesbury established a system of signals with M. Maret, one of the plenipotentiaries. Assent or compliance was expressed by Maret's taking his handkerchief out of one pocket, passing it before his face, and returning it into the other pocket. It was really a question of purchase and sale. Talleyrand and Barras insisted on payment in advance, which Pitt refused, for concessions which they were prepared to secure. Ultimately, however, the French, while demanding the cession of English conquests, refused any corresponding surrender on their own part. Lord Malmesbury received his passports and the war went on.

Canning had for some time been discontented with his position in the Foreign Office. He was serving two masters, hating the one and cleaving to the other. Grenville was the most haughty and frigid of Whigs,

painfully conscious, as he himself avowed, of his inability to manage men and adapt himself to them, and it was strange that they were able to go on together, as they did, nearly two years longer.

In 1799 Canning became one of the twelve commissioners of India, a post of less importance, whatever its titular rank, than that which he had quitted. He felt, naturally enough, that his abilities and services justified his aspiring to a higher place in the Administration. Towards the close of 1799 there was some talk of Dundas, who united the office of Secretary of State with that of Treasurer of the Navy, giving up the former post. Canning did not desire this office until he should 'grow bigger.' He feared to shock the public. Still he avows himself discontented with his position of work without distinction, and with liability to have the results of long labours overthrown by a speech or canvass of Lord Westmoreland's, the 'Sot' (Sceau) 'Privé' (Privy Seal) as he was accustomed to call him. As to his age —he was twenty-nine—he points to the examples of Castlereagh, now for two years Minister of Ireland; Addington, who was made Speaker at thirty; Lord Grenville, before that age Speaker and Secretary of State. Pitt he will not quote; he is a 'monster of talent.' But he protests against exclusion being practised against himself which is not put in force against others.

If peace is concluded, the present functions of the Third Secretary of State (War) will, he points out, in a great measure cease. But the public service requires that the number of respectable and efficient House of Commons offices should not be diminished, and the need

of reviewing the establishments will be urgent. 'Do you imagine that the Home Secretary (such as he is at present)'—such as he was then he was the Duke of Portland—'would be sufficient assistance to Pitt in a revision of this sort?' Canning thinks the Home Secretary ought to have Irish business in his hands, which, after the Union shall have been made, must be done in England.

Peace, however, was not made during Pitt's Administration. The Duke of Portland remained Home Secretary, and Dundas War Secretary, while the Treasurership of the Navy, which Canning desired, was given in May, 1800, to Dudley Ryder, afterwards Lord Harrowby. Canning became one of the Joint Paymasters of the Forces, an office which he held until Mr. Pitt's retirement and Mr. Addington's accession to the Premiership in 1801. During this period Mr. Canning spoke against peace with France, against the Slave Trade, and in favour of the union with Ireland. He urged that a separate Parliament, whatever limitations might be imposed on it at first, must ultimately be an independent Parliament, and that an independent Parliament meant national separation and the conversion of Ireland into a hostile republic under the protection of France. He varied these graver performances by a speech in favour of bull-baiting—a sort of playing at being Mr. Windham, which would scarcely have been more incongruous in Mr. Wilberforce himself.

CHAPTER IX.

THE 'ANTI-JACOBIN.'

THE return of Lord Malmesbury from Lisle, and the substitution of war for diplomacy, left, it may be assumed, a good deal of time on the hands of the youth of the Foreign Office and other departments of State. Hostilities were renewed with the pen as well as with the sword. Lord Malmesbury received his passports on September 18, 1797. The first number of 'The Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner, to be continued every Monday during the sitting of Parliament,' was published on November 20, 1797. It continued in existence without interruption until Monday, July 9, 1798, when the session of Parliament ended and the final number was issued. The conductors of the 'Anti-Jacobin' were better than their word, for they published a supplementary number on Monday, November, 1797, and two numbers on Monday, July 2, 1798. The paper consisted of eight pages quarto, double columns, and was sold for sixpence. The writers appear to have held conferences, for the purpose of talking over their future numbers, at the house of Lord Malmesbury. 'The Old Lion' had a court of his own at which the young lions met. In other words, Lord Malmesbury

had the valuable faculty of attracting the younger men of his party about him, quickening himself by their impulses and guiding them by his experience. On Sunday, the day before publication, the Anti-Jacobins foregathered at the house of Wright the publisher, 'No. 169, opposite Old Bond Street, Piccadilly,' where they had secured an editorial room, which they entered mysteriously by a door in another house, as ostentatiously avoiding notice as when some of them had donned the brown livery of the Christ Church Speaking Club. According to Croker, Canning could not take a cup of tea without a stratagem; and there was a good deal of the play-actor about his proceedings at this time. The conspirators in the 'Rovers' seem to have been the model of some of his doings. Whether through their elaborate precautions to avoid detection, or through courting notoriety, the writers in the 'Anti-Jacobin' failed to keep their secret. 'The youths whom Malmesbury chose' are signalised with a Homeric simplicity of epithet in the 'Epistle to the Editors of the "Anti-Jacobin,"' written by William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne, at this time a lad of nineteen, and published in the 'Morning Chronicle' of January 17, 1798. 'Ellis's sapient prominence of nose;' 'Morpeth's gait, important, proud, and big;' and 'Leveson-Gower's crop-imitating wig,' are commemorated. Their mutual puffery is gently ridiculed. 'Consequential Morpeth nods applause;' 'In every fair one's ears at balls and plays, the gentle Leveson-Gower whispers praise.' The editorship of the 'Anti-Jacobin' was generally attributed to Canning:—

> The skill
> Of youthful Canning guides the ranc'rous quill;
> With powers mechanic, far above his age,
> Adapts the paragraph and fills the page,
> Measures the column, mends whate'er's amiss,
> Rejects that letter, and accepts of this.

Canning's was undoubtedly the directing and inspiring mind of the 'Anti-Jacobin;' but the editor was William Gifford, the poet of the 'Baviad' and the 'Mæviad,' and afterwards the editor of the 'Quarterly Review.' The chief associates of Canning in the 'Anti-Jacobin' were George Ellis, the converted Anti-Pittite of the 'Rolliad,' one of the members of Lord Malmesbury's suite at Lisle, now remembered for his works on early English literature; and Hookham Frere. Other contributors were, or were supposed to be, Pitt, Jenkinson, 'Brother Bragge' and 'Brother Hiley,' Morpeth, Hammond, Baron Macdonald, and Mornington (afterwards Marquis Wellesley). The assignment of pieces to the several authors is made with great confidence by Mr. Charles Edmonds in his 'Poetry of the "Anti-Jacobin,"' but it seems to rest on second-hand and, in itself, not very conclusive testimony. It appears, however, tolerably certain that Canning wrote the prospectus; that he contributed two lines to the 'Loves of the Triangles,' of which Frere was otherwise the sole author; that he was the exclusive writer of the second and third parts of that poem, of the 'Friend of Humanity and the Knife Grinder,' of the 'Inscription for the Door of the Cell of Mrs. Brownrigg, the 'Prenticide,' of the second and third parts of 'The Progress of Man,' of 'The New Morality,' and of the lines in reply to the

'Epistle to the Editors of the "Anti-Jacobin."' The play of 'The Rovers; or, The Double Arrangement,' was a composite work in which Ellis and Frere had a part. The first five stanzas of the 'Song of Rogero' are assigned by Mr. Edmonds to Canning, the last to Pitt. The 'Edinburgh Review' attributes to Canning the speech of Erskine in the burlesque report of the meeting of the Friends of Freedom to commemorate the 18th of Fructidor. A 'Quarterly Reviewer,' on the other hand, states as from certain knowledge that this perfect sample of keen yet good-humoured badinage was from beginning to end the work of Hookham Frere.

The poetry of the 'Anti-Jacobin' is too well known to make it necessary, even if space allowed, to quote it here.

'The New Morality,' to which, with the exception of a few lines attributed to Pitt, Canning has an exclusive title, is his most serious if not his happiest contribution, and exhibits the temper by which, even in their lightest moods, he and his associates were animated. It is true moral satire—the satire not merely of personality and badinage, of defamation and ampoon, nor even the satire which attacks tendencies and opinions through persons, but that which is inspired by the sense of contrast between the professions and the practice of men, between the semblance and the reality of virtue, between the age in which we live and the better ages which are assumed to have preceded it. The lines in which the false virtues that ape the realities of benevolence, sensibility, justice, and candour, are denounced, and traced to 'that parent of ten thousand crimes, the new philosophy of modern times,' have become the commonplaces of the second-hand

satire of orators who steal their art ready made. The parody of the Benedicite was cited by Hone on his trial in justification of his parody of the Lord's Prayer:—

'Couriers' and 'Stars,' sedition's evening host,
Thou 'Morning Chronicle' and 'Morning Post!'
Whether ye make the rights of man your theme,
Your country libel, and your God blaspheme;
Or dirt on private worth and virtue throw,
Still, blasphemous or blackguard, praise Lepaux.

And ye, five other wandering bards that move
In sweet accord of harmony and love;
Coleridge and Southey, Lloyd, and Lamb & Co.
Tune all your mystic harps to praise Lepaux;
Priestley and Wakefield, humble holy men,
Give praises to his name with tongue and pen;
Thelwall, and ye that lecture as ye go,
And for your pains get pelted, praise Lepaux.

Praise him each Jacobin, or fool or knave,
And your cropped heads in sign of worship wave.
All creeping creatures, venomous and low,
Paine, Williams, Godwin, Holcroft—praise Lepaux!

La Réveillère Lepaux had the double claim to Canning's hatred of being one of 'the three scoundrelly directors' who had made peace impossible at Lisle, and the High Priest of the Theophilanthropic sect—a sort of Deistic anticipation of M. Comte's ritualistic religion of humanity—which had opened four temples in Paris and worshipped the Supreme Being with a liturgical service of chants and flowers.

It is impossible to approve the taste and feeling of some of these lines, which mix up in indiscriminate censure men of character with men whose leading

qualities can scarcely be described in these terms, and which coarsely appeal to prejudice and hatred. But to discriminate was, in Canning's view, to be guilty of the treacherous and unmanly vice of candour. Coleridge, even when he came to be on Canning's side, did not forgive this attack, although he reserved his indignation mainly for the inclusion of poor Lamb in a company with which politically he had nothing in common, being connected with the Jacobin bards, as they then were, only by the ties of poetry and friendship. But war is war, in politics as in arms; and Canning was the last man to blunt the weapons of personal satire and invective, which none could use so effectively as he. The taste of the times and the Whig precedent of the 'Rolliad,' the 'Probationary Odes,' and the 'Political Eclogues,' some few years earlier, and of Tom Moore some years later, justified him, so far as an example set and an example followed can do so.

'The New Morality' has something of the vigour of Dryden, something of the polish of Pope, and, in spite of its passionate prejudices and personal animosities, something of the sound moral feeling of Cowper. The place of the poetry of the 'Anti-Jacobin' amongst English political satires has been unduly lowered. It has been described as inferior to the 'Rolliad' and to the political verses of Tom Moore, which it is the fashion to call his best performance. There is, indeed, about the 'Rolliad,' with which for this purpose the other works of the same writers, the 'Probationary Odes' and the 'Political Eclogues,' may be associated, a rollicking vigour, a masculine force, a broad humour, and, with all their coarseness, a sort of good humour which the 'Anti-

Jacobin' lacks. The writers are not professional jokers, they are country gentlemen who happen also to be scholars and wits. Even when they misconduct themselves, they are gentlemen misconducting themselves. Their very grossness has an air of good manners and distinction about it. Moore, on the other hand, is the man of letters lending himself to the purposes of his patrons. The bookseller and the cheque from the newspaper office are always in view. He has unexampled grace, ease and vivacity, and copiousness of fancy and wit. But neither in the writers of the 'Rolliad' nor in Moore is there any belief. They have no cause; they are pure partisans; their satire is almost entirely personal. The 'Rolliad' and the other poems of its authors were written in vindication of the discreditable coalition between Fox and North. They attacked the Ministry of Pitt, which, apart from the circumstances of its origin—and these have since found constitutional vindicators upon the highest democratic theories—was, since Lord Chatham's and before the war with France, the most sagacious and patriotic that England saw until Lord Grey's, or at any rate until Mr. Canning's accession to power half a century later. The 'Rolliad' had, necessarily, no political principle to vindicate. Moore assailed the Prince Regent and his Tory Ministers as the 'Rolliad' people assailed George III., Mr. Pitt and his colleagues. He did not, save in the use of a few party cries, go much beyond personal badinage. The writers of the 'Anti-Jacobin,' though they were personal enough, and sometimes were as wantonly personal as Fitzpatrick or Moore, had a doctrine which they upheld and a doctrine which they attacked. They had a

scheme of politics and of morals, views of art, literature, and philosophy, of which they were the unflinching champions. Against the abstract principles of the French thinkers, the humanitarian and cosmopolitan enthusiasm of the earlier poetry of Coleridge and Southey, they set up a morality which is based on habits and usage; against the rights of man, the rights which depend on laws and institutions; against theophilanthropy, the Christian religion; against the Goddess of Reason, the Established Church. They believed that man is the creature of organised society; that he belongs to his own nation and to its institutions; and that to strip him of these things is to unclothe him and leave him naked, to expose him, wounded and bleeding. Canning and his friends hated the jargon of cause and principle and system; they thought it French; but nevertheless they had a cause, a principle, and a system; and this fact gives to the satire of the 'Anti-Jacobin' a place in English satire of a higher character than can be claimed for the writers with whom its authors are sometimes put in disadvantageous contrast. They were bent on amending the doctrines and manners of their time; bent on restoring sagacity to politics, good sense to literature, morality to the stage, sobriety to speculation. They had principles and a doctrine, and they applied those principles and that doctrine all round, in correction of French principles in politics, of false taste in letters, of wild speculation of the Payne and Erasmus Darwin school in social philosophy and science, of sentimental theophilanthropy or blank atheism in religion, of German licence on the stage. The 'Anti-Jacobin' represented a counter-reaction against an exaggerated

reaction. The gross abuses of custom and inheritance which the French revolution had swept away had led to a movement against all that was established and hereditary.

In protesting against the extravagances of cosmopolitan and humanitarian sentiment, and of individual licence, Canning fell into something like a worship of national prejudices and antipathies, of political abuses and ecclesiastical and social tyrannies. He did not make enough account, because his antagonists had made too much, of personal freedom, and of that sense of a common humanity which is the basis of national differences. His literary judgments rested no less on national sentiment, in this case inspired by good sense. He objected to the Latinised style of Junius and Johnson for the reason which made him ridicule the spondaics and dactylics of Southey and Coleridge. In English prose and verse the structure of the sentences and the metrical forms should be English. As Dr. Johnson said, criticising Hume's Gallicisms of style, the French structure may be as good as the English structure, but it is not English: 'My name might originally have been Nicholson as well as Johnson, but if you were to call me Nicholson now you would call me very absurdly.'

CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

WHILE Canning was taking part in the schoolboy parliament of Eton and the speaking club at Christ Church, lionising at Blenheim and Saltram, and earning renown in St. Stephen's and Downing Street, his mother was wandering over the country as a strolling actress. After the death of Reddish she had married a stage-struck silk mercer at Plymouth, named Hunn, who, failing in business, essayed the boards at Exeter and was damned. A situation was obtained for him in a merchant's office in London; but he too died, leaving Canning's mother for the third time a widow, with three children—two girls and a boy—dependent on her. Canning's affectionate devotion to her through life was unfailing. He wrote to her fully and regularly, he missed no opportunity of seeing her. The story of his having settled his pension upon her appears to be unfounded. I can find neither his name nor hers on any pension list. He enabled her, however, to withdraw from the stage. She took up her residence first at Winchester and afterwards at Bath, where she remained until 1827, the year of her own and of her son's death. The fact that Canning's mother had been on the stage, and was supposed to have a pension, was not

likely to escape the notice of the lampooners and libellers of the time. It saved them the necessity of simply lying; they had, in part at least, only to exaggerate. Wolcot ('Peter Pindar') was especially pertinacious and malignant. 'Gifford,' he makes Pitt say:—

> Gifford, that crooked babe of grace,
> And Canning, too, shall be in place,
> And get a pension for his mother.

Again:—

> 'I must have something,' Canning cries,
> And fastens on some rich mincepies,
> As dextrous as the rest to rifle;
> Ecod, and he must something do
> For mother and for sisters too,
> So steals some syllabubs and trifle.

On July 8, 1800, Canning married Miss Joan Scott, the daughter and co-heiress of General Scott, who had made a fortune in India and at the gaming-table. He left 100,000*l.* to each of his daughters, with the strange provision, for an Englishman, that if either of them married a nobleman her fortune should go to the other. The elder sister married the Marquis of Tichfield, the son of the Duke of Portland; but the younger, who became Mrs. Canning, generously refused to take advantage of her father's will, and insisted on the fortune remaining divided. We have to consider the political morality of the times, which, however, except in the limitation of opportunities, does not perhaps differ much from our own, in estimating the fact that when the marriage by which he was enriched took place—certainly when it was arranged—Canning,

though the pension story seems to be a pure fabrication, had and kept a sinecure as Receiver in the Alienation Office. Wolcot did not fail to magnify the received fiction, and to burthen the pension list with a perfect army of imaginary half-brothers and half-sisters of Canning. In the letter of Mr. Joseph Budge on the Middlesex election, written congenially in the Devonshire dialect to Lord Rolle, whose accent —δεβονίζει—is commemorated in the 'Rolliad,' this growth of calumnious fable is exhibited:—

And then one Canning, a poor boy,
Took from a school to his (Pitt's) employ,
Once thoft a huge deep thinker.
He, like a very duteous son,
Got nice tid-bits for mother Hun,
And brother Tim, the tinker.

And zister Peg, and zister Joan,
With scarce a flannel dicky on,
As ever I can larn;
Broken-down actresses, they zay,
That in the country used to play
Vor herrings in a barn.

Now though this curious young man got,
A hundred thousand with Miss Scott,
(Egad! a fortune thumping!)
Behold, a hadn't got the heart
To give his family a peart,
Zo zend mun out a mumping.

In another piece of rhymed and metrical scurrility the libeller says:—

I met mother Hun in the park,
The dam of our great Master Canning,
Forth flying as brisk as a lark,
With her daughters perspiring and fanning.

'You've heard of the marriage, I guess;
Nice match, oh, a very nice match;
Half a million of money, not less,
Oh, Lord! 'twas a beautiful catch.

'Yet how mortally proud they will be;
Three days, sir, before the grand wedding,
Bundled off were my daughters and me,
Pack'd off in the mail, bed and bedding.

'For we weren't of importance enough
Our court to great people to pay;
And so we were all ordered off,
For fear of disgracing the day.'

In a footnote appended to this precious effusion, Pitt is charged with having 'saddled the nation with pensions for Madam Hun, the Misses Hun, alias Cannings, alias Reddishes, a pension on her husband Mr. Richard Hun, a place in the West Indies for one Master Reddish, and military promotion in the East for the other, and, to crown the whole, a pension for poor Uncle Tommy, the tinker of Somers-town.' By a later effort of imagination, to 'brother Tom the tinker from Pentonville,' who, no doubt, is simply a variety of 'poor Uncle Tommy, the tinker of Somers-town,' is added 'brother Bob, a common soldier from Botany Bay.'

Mrs. Hunn is described as having been a woman of considerable force of mind and character, but of some-

what original and eccentric manners, such as the necessary emphasis of the stage and the self-assertion of a competitive profession occasionally produce. There is a dim suggestion of Mrs. Crummles in the accounts we have of her; but there is no trace of any disposition on Canning's part to keep her out of view; and his wife, who was devoted to him, and, with Charles Ellis, was to the last his confidante, even beyond what is prudent in matters of State—he had no secrets from her, his friends said—is not likely to have been at variance with him on this point. Her own generosity to her sister is a strong presumption that she would not fail in generosity and tenderness to one who had found a harbour after a stormy passage and some shipwrecks. Wolcot's libels, however, show amid what accompaniments of calumny and insult the business of public life was carried on at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. On his marriage Canning left Spring Gardens and took up his abode in the house in Conduit Street now numbered 37, his occupation of which a tablet commemorates. He had previously lived at Putney, probably to be near Pitt, and while resident there had formed a friendship with the unhappy Princess of Wales. He took part in the romps of Montagu House, Blackheath, in which graver persons—the brothers Scott, afterwards Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell, and Perceval—had been sharers. Of all these men Canning alone remained true to the Princess throughout her troubles. When she became queen he confronted the hostility of the King, which at that time might mean permanent exile from political life, rather than join in the proceedings against her.

CHAPTER XI.

ATTACKS ON ADDINGTON.

THE parliamentary union with Ireland had been passed in the two Parliaments of Westminster and Dublin in the summer of 1800. The aim of the political union was to defeat the French design of converting Ireland into a Hibernian republic after the Batavian, Cisalpine, and Ligurian model. The union of the Parliaments was, however, in Pitt's eyes, the condition under which alone the moral union between the two countries which he thought Catholic Emancipation would secure became safe. The King refused his consent to any relief, and emphasised his refusal by going mad. Mr. Pitt resigned office, and after some months' delay, occasioned by the King's inability to attend to business, Mr. Addington became Prime Minister. Canning, who sat for the Irish borough of Tralee in the now United Parliament, was bitter in his hostility to Addington and incessant in his efforts to restore Pitt to office. A sort of round-robin of protest and remonstrance was projected, which was to be presented to Addington, asking him, as an act of Decian virtue, to sacrifice himself for his country and to make way for Mr. Pitt. The Dean of Christ Church, Lord Malmesbury, and Canning were active in the matter. But the plot got wind. Pitt,

who had covertly favoured the project, was forced to discountenance it, and the thing dropped. There were long intrigues, in which Canning was the most active agent. His hostility was not confined to attacks in Parliament and to machinations out of it. In the years 1803–4 he was busy in the 'Oracle,' as he had been half a dozen years before in the 'Anti-Jacobin,' but his attacks were now purely personal. The journal, so far as he is concerned, might have been properly called the 'Anti-Addington.' The indecencies to which he now and then descended would have amply justified the somewhat prudish remonstrance which Wilberforce addressed to him with respect to the 'Anti-Jacobin.' The squibs of the period were reprinted in the annual volumes called 'The Spirit of the Public Journals;' and Sir George Lewis, in his 'Essays on the Administration of Great Britain from 1788 to 1830,' enumerates those which 'appear to be by Mr. Canning.' The first of these, entitled 'Proofs of Political Sagacity,' resembles those copious memoranda for his speeches which Canning was in the habit of preparing, and contains indeed a good deal of the sarcasm which is involved in the rhetoric and argument of his parliamentary speeches, disengaged from them and given in its undiluted essence. The points were given in a series of antitheses, supported by references to ministerial statements. The first two may serve as a specimen:—

How very wise we were to make peace with Bonaparte, because his tone and temper were so friendly! But

How very wise we were to go to war with him again, because his tone and temper have always been so hostile!

Addington was to Canning—as he was, indeed, to

everybody in the colloquial slang of the lobbies, of society, and of the press—always the doctor. His father had been the family physician of Lord Chatham; but the nickname, though this reference to the paternal profession is implied in it, is said to have been derived from his recommendation to the King of a hop-pillow as a soporific. 'The Doctor: an Ode—Scene, Treasury Chambers,' has the motto from Romeo and Juliet: 'I do remember an apothecary, and here about he dwells.'

> Doctor, Doctor! what dose, narcotic, emetic,
> Diuretic, cathartic, or diaphoretic,
> . . . . . .
> Can retrieve your poor country's deplorable case,
> Her destruction avert or repeal her disgrace?

'Apothecaries' Hall, First of April, Mr. H. A.'s Birthday and Anniversary of the Arrival of the Treaty of Amiens,' describes a banquet in honour of Mr. Addington. It gives one stanza, not very remarkable, from a song in parody of Canning's own verses, 'The Pilot that Weathered the Storm,' addressed to 'The Pilot that Moored us in Peace.' The following Anacreontic, as it is called, refers to the fact that Addington had made his brother Hiley Addington, and his brother-in-law Bragge, afterwards Bragge-Bathurst (both of them, by the way, contributors to the 'Anti-Jacobin'), respectively Secretary of War and Treasurer of the Navy:—

> How blest, how firm the statesman stands
> (Him no low intrigue can move),
> Circled by faithful kindred bands,
> And propped by fond fraternal love.
> When his speeches hobble vilely,
> What 'Hear him's' burst from Brother Hiley;

When his faltering periods lag,
Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge;
When the faltering periods lag,
Or the yawning audience flag;
When his speeches hobble vilely,
Or the House receives them drily,
  Cheer, oh, cheer him, Brother Bragge,
Cheer, oh, cheer him, Brother Hiley.
Each a gentleman at large,
Lodged and fed at public charge,
Paying (with a grace to charm ye),
This the Fleet, and that the Army.
Brother Bragge and Brother Hiley,
Cheer him when he speaks so vilely;
Cheer him when his audience flag,
Brother Hiley, Brother Bragge.

In a subsequent letter Timothy Gosling sends a song, which he represents as having been accidentally omitted from the report of the meeting, and in which Pitt and Addington are contrasted:—

MODERATE MEN AND MODERATE MEASURES.

Praise to placeless proud ability,
  Let the prudent muse disclaim,
And sing the statesman all civility,
  Whom moderate talents raise to fame.
He no random projects urging,
  Makes us wild alarm to feel;
With moderate measures gently purging
  Ills that prey on Britain's weal.

Chorus.

Gently purging,
Gently purging,
Gently purging Britain's weal.

Addington with measured motion
Keeps the tenour of his way;
To glory yields no rash devotion,
Led by burning lights astray.
Splendid talents are deceiving,
Tend to counsels much too bold;
Moderate men we prize, believing
All that glistens is not gold.

CHORUS.

All that glistens,
All that glistens,
All that glistens is not gold.

'The Blocks' is a paper containing a great variety of epigrams, comparing certain defences of the Thames so named with analogous political defences:—

If blocks can from danger deliver,
Two places are safe from the French;
The first is the mouth of a river,
The second the Treasury Bench.

'Ambubajarum Collegia, Pharmacopolæ,' is a comparison in verse between Addington and his colleagues and certain notorious quacks of the day. 'The Doctor's Practice justified by Precedent' depicts Addington as a political Sangrado, bleeding and purging his patient to death. Young Bolus, in the following stanza, is Addington's son, to whom the Clerkship of the Pells had been given—a sinecure in the Court of Exchequer not more abusive than that which Canning himself held as Receiver-General of the Alienation Office:—

Our Doctor's practice is the same,
To park and lodge he makes his claim,
In Richmond Palace dwells;

Gives Navy-purse to Brother Bragge,
Hiley secures the Army bag,
  Young Bolus bolts the Pells.
The patient next so high in blood,
Cupped, bled, and purged, as he thinks good,
  He lowers to such condition,
That while he swears he has sweetly dozed,
And safe in peace serene composed,
  He dies of his Physician.

'More of the Doctor,' and the 'Doctor versus Cocker,' do not contain anything very remarkable. The latter possibly refers to the financial blunders of Addington, which had enabled Pitt to 'set up' what Canning called 'a separate indignation' of his own.

'Good Intentions' affects to be an extract from the first canto of a poem on that subject, of which the argument is thus given :—

Happy that nation's lot I ween
  (As Briton's sons can tell),
Whose rulers very little mean,
  But mean that little well.

The theme is thus developed :—

But more than all, we love to dwell
On thy best talent, meaning well ;
Whether thou flatter or alarm us,
The intention never fails to charm us.

Others, with necromantic skill,
May bend men's passions to their will,
Raise with dark spells the tardy loan,
To shake the vaunting Consul's throne.
In thee no magic arts surprise,
No tricks to cheat our wondering eyes ;

On thee shall no suspicion fall
Of sleight of hand, or cup, or ball;
Even foes must own thy spotless fame,
Unbranded with the conjuror's name.

Ne'er shall thy virtuous thoughts conspire
To wrap majestic Thames on fire;
And if that black and monstrous grain,
Which strews the field with thousands slain,
Slept undiscovered yet on earth,
Thou ne'er hadst caused the monstrous birth
Nor aided (such thy pure intention)
That diabolical invention.

Hail, then, on whom our State is leaning,
O minister of mildest meaning!
Blest with such virtues to talk big on,
With such a head (to hang a wig on):
Head of wisdom, soul of candour,
Happy Britain's guardian gander,
To rescue from the invading Gaul,
Her Commerce, Credit, Capital!
While Rome's great goose could save alone
One capitol of senseless stone.

A prose 'Parallel between Buonaparte and Mr. Addington' is long, and not in Canning's best vein. 'St. James's Park Ghost,' an adventure of which Mr. Addington is the hero, has more of Swift's indecency than of his wit. 'A Symposium, or Attic Entertainment, given in Downing Street on the 6th day of February, 1804,' describes farcically an entertainment in honour of the birthday of the Prime Minister's father, to which the guests were summoned in the following billet, in the shape of a physician's prescription:—

De cibis carn. et pisc. sumatur :
De vino quant. suff. recipiatur,
Cum Recit. atque Mus. sumend.
Ad gaud. et jocos promovendum.
H. A., *M.D.*

The festival is noisy. In its course Mr. Manasseh (whose name a later generation has contracted to Massey) Lopes is insultingly knocked down with a ham; Sheridan misbehaves himself; Addington makes a speech in terms of medicine, and the meeting is broken up by the report of Bonaparte's landing in Essex.

From 'A Quartetto, written for and sung at Mr. Addington's last public Dinner,' we take the parts of Addington, Tierney (who had quitted his party to take office under Addington) and Sheridan.

Mr. Addington.

If a body put a body in the Speaker's chair,
Must a body be nobody but a cypher there?
My gown and wig, so long and big, they pleased the Royal eye,
Both King and Queen admired my mien, so Minister am I.

Mr. Tierney.

If a body join a body called a party Whig,
Need a body for that body care a single fig?
Like an ass retired Dundas from Bench of Treasury,
So in his barge I sail at large, triumphant George Tierney.

Mr. Sheridan.

If a body everybody seeks to please and court,
Must a body from nobody find the least support?
Not a man trusts Sheridan with half a halfpenny,
Yet all the day I'm blithe and gay, and d—— at night am I.

Addington speaks in the following address, parodied from the 'Tragedy of Douglas,' Act II., Scene 1 :—

The STRANGER.

My name's the Doctor ; on the Berkshire Hills
My father purged his patients—a wise man
Whose constant care was to increase his store,
And keep his eldest son, myself, at home.
But I had heard of politics, and long'd
To sit within the Commons House, and get
A place ; and luck gave what my sire denied.
Some thirteen years ago, or ere my fingers
Had learned to mix a potion, or to bleed,
I flattered Pitt, I cringed, and sneak'd and fawn'd,
And thus became the Speaker. I alone,
With pompous gait and peruke full of wisdom,
The unruly members could control, or call
The House to order.
Tir'd of the chair, I sought a bolder flight,
And grasping at his power, I struck my friend
Who held that place which now I've made my own.
Proud of my triumph, I disdained to court
The patron hand which fed me, or to seem
Grateful to him who raised me into notice ;
And when the King had called his Parliament
To meet him here, convened in Westminster,
With all my family crowding at my heels,
My brothers, cousins, followers, and my son,
I showed myself Prime Doctor to the country.
My end's attained : my only aim has been
To keep my place and gild my humble name.

Canning made merry, in more than one paper, over a project to protect the coasts of the country by sinking large masses of stone in assailable places. He describes

with much fulness in a poem, called 'The Stone Expedition; or, The Doctor's Head Good for Something,' a scheme according to which Addington's head should be used as a maritime obstruction :—

> Thou who hast dragg'd the country down so low,
> To save her yet might Roman virtue shew.
> That pond'rous head which ne'er presumed to think
> But England tottered on perdition's brink ;
> That head where army, navy, and finance
> Are jerk'd about like puppets in a dance ;
> Where all is chaos, where no reason's light
> Breaks forth to brighten the Bœotian night ;
> That head, that leaden cranium, wouldst thou lend,
> To the world's centre, should the mass descend.
> Neptune would tremble at the impulsive force
> Of such a plummet, and permit its course.

The various accretions are described by which the head of Addington, sunk at the bottom of the sea, is converted into a shoal, to the despair and terror of Bonaparte, whose flotilla is wrecked on it, 'some ships having their bottoms beaten out by striking on the doctor's *os frontis*, others foundering on the occiput,' &c. Mr. Vansittart proposes that the members of the Cabinet should visit in a diving-bell 'the remains of the late Dr. A——n, now for his country's sake converted into a mud bank.' But they all on various pretexts refuse.

A political song, 'Axing pardon,' refers to the speech of an Irish member who had spoken of Ireland as a woman in labour 'cured by the care and precaution of her doctor'—a medical metaphor which Canning could not, of course, neglect the chance of turning to the

ridicule of Addington. 'A Petition Extraordinary' affects to proceed from Addington, Castlereagh, and Mr. Yorke, and prays that 'Napoleon Buonaparte and others, his vile associates, may be delivered over to the custody of the Serjeant-at-arms, and retained in durance,' so that they may not invade the country until the Volunteer system of England is in full operation. Addington is said to have tried to enlist Tierney, to whom he had given office, and Sheridan, towards whom he made advances on his side in the conflict of pamphlets and paragraphs. The allusions to them in Canning's pasquinades show that he recognised or suspected the alliance.

Dean Pellew attributes the origin of the feud between Canning and Addington to Canning's resentment of certain supposed slights on Addington's part. But the character and situation of the two men sufficiently explain it. 'I can't bear fools, anything but fools,' said Fox of Addington; and this was, no doubt, Canning's feeling. They remained at variance until the year 1812, not speaking when they met in society. Canning, calling at the Home Office on private business in that year, was accidentally shown into Addington's (then Viscount Sidmouth's) waiting-room. Addington hearing his name sent for him, and with a generosity and gentleness of manner before which Canning, greatly moved, broke down, solicited a reconciliation. At Canning's request, Dean Jackson, some time after, wrote to Lord Sidmouth, to say how deeply Canning had felt the kindness, which at the moment he was physically unable to acknowledge.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SECOND PITT ADMINISTRATION.

PITT affected to disapprove of Canning's attacks upon Addington—'Look you, mock him not!'—and of his over-zeal for Pitt's return to office. The 'experimental peace' of Amiens was only a truce. The nation contemplated with alarm the prospect of Addington's remaining at the head of affairs during the war that it was now seen must presently break out. Pitt wrote to the King, saying that he could no longer support the policy of the Ministry. This was on April 22, 1804. Pitt made an unsuccessful attempt to include Fox, Grenville, and their friends in the Administration. In the list of the proposed Ministry in Mr. Pitt's handwriting—of which Lord Stanhope has printed a facsimile—Canning is assigned the Irish Office. The King, who had just recovered from a fresh mental illness, declared that he preferred civil war to Fox, and Grenville declined to enter the Government without him.

Canning was a reluctant member of Pitt's second Administration. He was deeply disappointed at the exclusion of Fox and Grenville. He told Pitt that he would rather not take office at all, and in any case he objected to Cabinet office, for which the country did not think him yet ripe. It would attribute his

advancement to favouritism on Pitt's part. He was anxious not to be in the secrets of administration, but if Pitt desired to have a parliamentary friend close to him, and thought that he could be of assistance to him in the House of Commons, he would place himself at his disposal. The only offices, he added, outside the Cabinet which were in the line of promotion and seniority were the Secretaryship at War and the Treasurership of the Navy. A few days after this conversation, on May 12, Pitt wrote to Canning, offering him his choice between the two offices he had designated. Pitt, who did not like grudging and conditional support, added that he hoped Canning would not feel himself bound to take either if to do so was disagreeable to him. Canning chose the Treasurership of the Navy. The Treasurership of the Navy was one of those lucrative offices the perquisites of which had been shorn more than twenty years before by Burke's economic reform. Before that time the incumbent of it was allowed, as was the Paymaster of the Forces, to employ for his own purposes the balances lying in his hands. When this abuse was abolished, the salary, which had been 2,000*l.* a year, was raised to 4,000*l.*, with an allowance of 1,500*l.* a year for a deputy. The payment of seamen's wages and of the navy and victualling bills were among the duties of the Treasurer of the Navy, whose office in Broad Street was the centre on which depended branch establishments in different parts of the kingdom.

A squib in the 'Oracle,' which Sir G. Lewis assigns to Canning, called 'Counter Theatricals,' in reply to a paper called 'Theatricals' in the 'Morning Chronicle,'

ridicules more coarsely and less cleverly than was Canning's wont the leading antagonists of Mr. Pitt's Government. It describes a comedy called 'Discontent; or, The Murmurs of Opposition,' which is presently to be produced, and the company which are to act it. 'The ostensible Manager of the Company is an old Fox, who generally plays a principal part in the pieces acted by his troop. He was once in a manner *hissed off the Stage* for disrespectful behaviour to the audience; that is, for saying there was no audience worth acting to'—this refers to Fox's secession from 1797 to 1802—'and did not venture to reappear until a considerable time had elapsed. . . . He has always been considered an actor of great talents, tho' exceedingly unhappy in the choice of parts which he ought to play, as well as in the pieces which he has produced, most of which have been irretrievably damned, &c. . . . Among those who are principally to support the Manager in this Drama is an Irishman, who is known among his friends by the name of Dan-Sherry or Sherry-Dan, supposed to have been given him by his Bottle Companions in allusion to the great quantities of sherry—we are told, however, claret—which he has been continually pouring down his throat, and which has lighted up a flame in his countenance that all the water in the House cannot extinguish. The next actor is known by the appellation of Wind-him, from his notorious liability to be wound or turned about, or in allusion to the variableness and inconsistency of the wind, which he a good deal resembles,' &c.

Reluctant as Canning had been to join Pitt's second Administration, he was presently still more reluctant to

remain in it. Pitt's majority proved small and uncertain. Addington carried with him a certain number of dissentient Conservatives, and his help was essential. The Duke of Portland resigned the Presidency of the Council, which was conferred upon Addington, who was raised to the peerage with the title of Viscount Sidmouth.

To Canning Addington's appointment was a bitter mortification. He wrote to Lady Hester Stanhope on hearing of it: 'Everybody must know that the arrangement which places Mr. Addington in the Cabinet displaces me.' When the project was first mooted for overtures to Addington, he had thought that a peerage and a pension, not a Cabinet office, were intended. 'A.,' Canning went on to say, 'if I understand your letter right, is a Minister and I am nothing. I cannot help it. I cannot face the House of Commons or walk the streets in this state of things as I am.' He then asks Lady Hester to represent to Pitt that he should make Canning's inevitable retirement his act, not by dismissing him but by taking for granted that it is inevitable, and by further explaining the matter to the King, with whom he wishes to stand well, and to Lord Melville, by whom he did not wish to be misunderstood. Canning was, however, induced to retain office, probably on Pitt's appeal to his loyalty and patriotism. Addington, though he said naturally enough that he could never meet him nor alter his feelings towards him, disclaimed any idea of wishing to interfere with his private friendships or his prospects.

The gain of Addington was as nothing to the loss of Melville, charged with having, as Treasurer of the

Navy in a former Administration, misappropriated public money, and condemned by the House of Commons, though on impeachment acquitted by the House of Lords.

Pitt, feeling the necessity of strengthening his Ministry, asked the King, during the recess of 1805, to allow him to propose office to Fox and the Grenvilles; but the King was obstinate as regards Fox, and Thomas Grenville refused to come in without him. Canning, who told Malmesbury this in December, said that Pitt now felt that he must depend upon his own side, and that he and Charles Yorke were to be brought into the Cabinet—a statement which George Rose discredits. If Pitt had this design he did not live to carry it out. The disgrace of Melville, and the ruin at Ulm and Austerlitz of his plans of a European confederation against France, against which the victory of Trafalgar alone could be set, broke down his physical strength. He took Melville's disgrace the more gravely: Austerlitz, he said to Huskisson, might be got over, but not the Tenth Report. Canning, who visited him on the day before his death at Putney, whither he had returned from Bath, saw that it was an affair of a few hours. Canning had long been anxious. His admiration of his political chief and master was expressed in the epitaph on the statue in the Guildhall of London.

Mr. Canning's parliamentary activity was not great during Mr. Pitt's second Administration. He spoke at length on the defences of the country in February 1805, of course supporting Mr. Pitt's schemes; but the main call made upon his powers was for the defence of Lord

Melville, already punished by dismissal from office and the erasure of his name from the list of Privy Councillors, against the impeachment proposed by Mr. Whitbread. Canning held the office of Treasurer of the Navy, in which the offences, reduced by the decision of the House of Lords and by subsequent opinion to something less than peculation, were committed, and he therefore spoke with knowledge of the way of doing business in that department. He could not help seeing the funny side, not of the trial, but of some of the actors in it, and he was especially tickled with the virtuous egotism and self-importance of the speech in which Mr. Whitbread, the chief accuser, brought the articles of impeachment before the House of Lords. His sense of them was expressed in—

'FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.'

Part of Mr. Whitbread's speech at the trial of Lord Melville put into verse by Mr. Canning at the time it was delivered :—

I'm like Archimedes for science and skill,
I'm like a young Prince going straight up a hill;
I'm like (with respect to the fair be it said)—
I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed.
If you ask why the 11th of June I remember [1]
Much better than April, or May, or November,
On that day, my Lords, with truth I assure ye,
My sainted progenitor set up his brewery;
On that day in the morn he began brewing beer,
On that day, too, commenced his connubial career;

[1] The day on which Lord Melville was heard in his own defence at the bar of the House of Commons.

On that day he received and he issued his bills ;
On that day he cleared out all the cash from his tills ;
On that day he died, having finished his summing,
And the angels all cried, 'Here's old Whitbread a-coming.'
So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh,
For his Beer with an *e* and his Bier with an *i* ;
And still on that day in the hottest of weather
The whole Whitbread family dine all together.
So long as the beams of this house shall support
The roof which o'ershades this respectable Court
Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos ;
So long as that sun shall shine in at those windows,
My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines,
Mine recorded in journals, his blazon'd on signs.

Canning had been a very discontented member of Pitt's second Administration. He was an uncomfortable colleague, hard to live with. At its formation he quarrelled with Hawkesbury, who refused to join him in trying to oust their old Oxford comrade, Wallace, from the India Board. He sneered at Hawkesbury himself in debate, and, emulating the youthful freedom of Fox, expressed his disapproval of the composition of the Ministry of which he was a subordinate member. He incurred Pitt's reproof and the threat of dismissal. But his attachment to Pitt was unabated, and Pitt's death consecrated it.

CHAPTER XIII.

CANNING AND THE GRENVILLE-FOX MINISTRY.

MR. PITT'S death, of course, dissolved his Administration. To the close of his life Canning did not cease passionately to vindicate the measures and character of the man in office and close political and personal connection with whom the first ten years of his parliamentary life had been passed. An early opportunity was given him of doing so. The House of Commons was asked to vote a sum of 40,000*l.* for the payment of Pitt's debts, and it did so unanimously. But the motion for an address to the King in favour of a public funeral and a monument in Westminster Abbey was opposed, among others, by Fox and Windham—by Fox on the ground that Pitt, though a pure and disinterested was a mischievous statesman; by Windham, who alleged that, whatever his merits, he had not won success. Canning protested against the vote for the payment of Pitt's debts being treated 'as an eleemosynary grant to posthumous necessities.' It was a 'public debt to a highly meritorious public servant,' and only as such could his friends sanction it. On the death of Mr. Pitt the King endeavoured to find another Addington in Lord Hawkesbury, in lieu of the Addington he had lost in Sidmouth, who was now the ally in faction, though not

in principles, of Fox and Grenville. But the time of Lord Hawkesbury, who as Lord Liverpool was destined to be Prime Minister for fifteen successive years, had not yet come. The King saw that there was nothing for it but to have recourse to Lord Grenville, as formerly, and with no less reluctance, he had been obliged to accept Lord Rockingham, and to allow Grenville, as formerly he had been forced to allow Rockingham, to bring Fox with him. In other respects the new Ministry resembles rather the coalition of 1783 than the purely Whig Administration of 1782. Grenville was an abler and firmer Portland; Sidmouth was a dull North; Fox, as Gobbo says, was himself. The Whig element predominated. Sidmouth, indeed, whose forty or fifty followers in the House of Commons could not be spared, would have been the only Tory and King's friend in it if he had not been allowed to bring in with him Lord Ellenborough, as he brought the Earl of Buckinghamshire into the second Ministry of Pitt. The faithful old steward and his mastiff, to use the expression of a contemporary observer, were employed to watch the new servants. The appointment of Ellenborough was constitutionally open to grave objection. Lord Ellenborough was Lord Chief Justice of England, and in that character might quite conceivably have to preside over political prosecutions ordered by the Cabinet of which he was a member, being thus in practice judge and accuser. It was, no doubt, intended by the Toryism of the Lord Chief Justice to balance the Liberalism of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Erskine. A better arrangement was proposed, which would have made Erskine Chief Justice

in the Court in which he had won so many victories for constitutional freedom, leaving him out of the Cabinet, and have given the Chancellorship to Ellenborough, a great lawyer, though, where politics were concerned, an aggressive and tyrannical judge. This plan Ellenborough declined to acquiesce in. Canning, with a true constitutional instinct, saw this fault in the composition of the Ministry. On March 3, 1806, Mr. Spencer Stanhope moved a series of resolutions condemning the admission of the Lord Chief Justice of England to the Cabinet. Sir Samuel Romilly, being Solicitor-General, was officially obliged to defend the arrangement. Mr. Canning, who might on this occasion have repeated Pitt's boast and claim to have unw(h)igged the gentlemen opposite, spoke with great vigour and grasp of principle. The most interesting passage of his speech to readers of the present day refutes an absurdity, still sometimes repeated with an air of great wisdom as one of the pleasing paradoxes, the tickling pleasantries, of our political system. The government of England being essentially government by the Cabinet, it is considered very piquant to say that the Cabinet is unknown to the Constitution. This was said to Canning, who replied that 'he never heard a more untenable proposition. In a free country such as this, where a control was necessary, and where responsibility must necessarily lodge somewhere, were we at this day to be turned round upon by being told that there was no such thing as a Cabinet? We had persons who advised with his Majesty, who performed all the functions of government, who were known as the Cabinet, who were known all over London and

the country to be so; but the moment we entered the door we were told that there was no Cabinet. It might be true, indeed, that the Constitution recognised nothing under the name of the Cabinet, but it was not the less certain that there was such an assembly, with whom the responsibility for whatever advice they gave his Majesty rested.' In fact, all this talk of the Constitution knowing and not knowing, recognising and not recognising, is a misleading metaphor. In the sense in which there is no Cabinet, there is no English Constitution; in the sense in which the English Constitution exists, the Cabinet now exists as a part of it, and as the most essential part. The English Constitution is not a paper constitution, though a paper constitution is not necessarily a bad thing. It is an affair of growth and usage, of method and practice, and the fact that a usage has grown up, and that a method has been put into habitual practice, makes them constitutional. It used to be said, and it is still now often said, that the office of Prime Minister is not known to the Constitution. Next to the existence of the Cabinet, and as an essential part of it, it is the most important element in the Constitution. The office was recognised officially for the first time, it may be, in the recital of the names and ranks of the plenipotentiaries in the preamble of the Treaty of Berlin, in which Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, is described as 'First Lord of her Majesty's Treasury, Prime Minister of England.' In fact, there are two English Constitutions—a constitution of form and ornament, and one of fact and operation; a constitution of text-writers, and a constitution of actuality. The three powers in

the archaic constitution are the Queen, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled. The three powers in the living and working constitution are the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the Commons dispersed through the electoral body. The new Constitution, which may be good or evil, acts through the forms and by the mechanism provided by the old, and may long do so; but the form ought not to be confounded with the substance nor the matter with the spirit.

Canning, who was afterwards destined to give his own name to a political school, was now become the leader of the group known as the Pittites. After a short interval of hesitation, based upon his former relations with Lord Grenville, he plunged into opposition. George Rose, who, through their common relations with Mr. Pitt, was very intimate with Canning, says that he agreed with Grenville and was prevented from joining him only by party ties. Canning, in one of the debates in reply to a challenge from Fox, avowed his personal confidence in and esteem for Lord Grenville: 'But to talk of him now as the head of the Government, after all that we have heard, after all we have seen, to consider him as the directing and presiding mind, is impossible. I am sorry for it. But I admit no claim for confidence arising from an expression which was applied to an individual, and which was founded on error as to his weight and situation in the Government. In his colleagues I never had, and never professed to have, the confidence which they now demand.'

The following verses, entitled 'Elijah's Mantle' (*vide* 2 Kings, chap. ii.), are printed in 'The Spirit of

the Public Journals' for 1806. A prefatory note states that, 'though the author's name is withheld, most readers of taste will, we think, make a shrewd guess at the poet.' Canning told Lord Boringdon that, after the formation of Pitt's second Government, he had abjured for ever all communication with the gentlemen of the press; but these verses did not appear in any newspaper. There can be little doubt that they are from the pen of Mr. Canning, and they express his feeling towards Mr. Pitt and towards Mr. Pitt's ministerial successors with more than parliamentary freedom. He exhorts the several Ministers to emulate Pitt:—

Grenville, to aid the Treasury fame,
A portion of his mantle claim,
  Pitt's generous ardour feel;
'Bove sordid self resolve to soar,
Amidst Exchequer gold be pure;
  Thy wealth a nation's weal.

Fox, if on thee some remnant fall,
The shred may to thy mind recall
  Those hours of loud debate,
When thy unhallowed lips oft praised
The glorious fabric traitors raised
  On Bourbon's fallen state.

Thy soul let Pitt's example fire,
With patriot zeal thy tongue inspire,
  Spite of thy Gallic leaven,
And teach thee in thy latest day,
His form of prayer, if thou canst pray,
  'O save my country, Heaven!'

Windham, if e'er thy sorrow flow
At private loss or public woe,
  Thy rigid brow unbend ;
Tears over Cæsar Brutus shed,
His hatred warr'd not with the dead,
  And Pitt was once thy friend.

Does envy bid thee not to mourn,
Hold thou his mantle up to scorn,
  His well-earn'd fame assail ;
Of funeral honours rob his corse,
And at his virtues till thou art hoarse,
  Like the Greek cynic, rail.

Illustrious Roscius of the State,
Now breech'd and harness'd for debate,
  Thou wonder of thy age !
Petty or Betty, art thou hight,
By Granta sent to strut thy might (night ?)
  On Stephen's bustling stage.

Pitt's chequered robe 'tis thine to wear,
Take of his mantle, too, a share ;
  'Twill aid thy ways and means ;
And should fat Jack and his cabal
Cry, 'Rob us the Exchequer, Hal,'
  'Twill charm away the fiends.

Sidmouth, though low that head is laid
Which call'd thee from thy native shade
  And gave thee second birth ;
Gave thee the sweets of power and place,
The tufted robe and gilded mace,
  And rear'd thy puny worth ;

Think how his mantle wrapt thee round ;
Is one of equal virtue found
Among thy new compeers ?
Or can thy cloak of Amiens stuff,
Once laugh'd to scorn by blue and buff,
Hide thee from Windham's jeers ?

Mr. Canning's parliamentary compliments to Lord Grenville were sarcasms scarcely masked. A current of steady animosity lay beneath the alternating reconciliations and alienations of Canning and his old chief at the Foreign Office. To say that the ostensible Prime Minister is not really the head of the Government over which he seems to preside, to assume that he is without decisive weight, the directing spirit being with another, is to use the most dexterously chosen topic and language of disparagement and irritation.

Fox was obviously sinking when, in 1804, Pitt's plan for a combined Administration broke down. Fox reconciled himself to his proscription by the King on the ground that he was too old for office. His experience two years later confirmed his conclusion. Yet he was then only fifty-five years of age, and was now fifty-seven, a time of life at which later statesmen—Lord Palmerston, Lord Beaconsfield, and Mr. Gladstone—have had the most active and distinguished part of their career before them. Pleasure and self-indulgence had done in Fox's case what incessant labour (not unaided by the two-bottle habits of the time) had done more rapidly by twelve years in Pitt's. Fox had this advantage over Pitt, that he knew how to take life easily. He enjoyed the retreat of St. Anne's and his book under a tree. Pitt pined and repined

out of office, in which more than twenty out of his twenty-three years of parliamentary life had been spent. It was now obvious, however, that Fox must be relieved of a part of his parliamentary labours. Though he still attended to the duties of his department, he had been compelled towards the middle of June to give up attendance in the House of Commons. Grenville, through Lord Wellesley, made overtures to Canning, who described their character in a letter to Lord Boringdon, dated August 9. Canning alone was to be admitted into the Cabinet. Professional advancement was to be secured to Perceval, who at this time combined politics with his practice at the bar. Other claims were to be considered as opportunity arose. Canning showed prudence and good sense in rejecting the proposal. 'To be plunged at once,' he said, 'into the midst of the present Cabinet, constituted as it now is, and that not in consequence of any general arrangement on either side, but by Lord Grenville's individual selection of me individually, and without the King's previous knowledge; in these circumstances to have the labour of the House of Commons devolved upon me in Fox's absence and (what would be worse) under Fox's occasional superintendence, would, I really think, have formed altogether the most unendurable, the most discreditable, and the most hopeless situation into which any man ever was misguided by an inconsiderate precipitancy of ambition.' In the event of the continuance of the war, Canning intimated that he might get over his difficulties in order to aid the Government, though even then he could not reconcile himself to the project which Lord Granville

Leveson-Gower had heard as in contemplation of 'Fox's retaining his office, and discontinuing parliamentary attendance with a purpose of coming down now and then to see that things were going on right.' Most of all, the King must be admitted into his own Government 'if the Ministry was to be all that it ought to be for weight, authority, popularity, and confidence.' He 'must approve the design and be seen in the execution.' This doctrine is either harmless or mischievous, as it is interpreted and applied. Canning had seen enough of the relations between the King and his Ministers to know the necessity of a good understanding between them. It was difficult to carry on the King's Government with the King in opposition. Canning showed later in life, in combating the attempted proscription of him by George IV., that he could manfully resist the excesses of royal pretensions. But the Canning of 1806–7 was not the Canning of 1824–27 any more than the Pitt of 1784 was the Pitt of 1804. Happily for himself and England, the later was the greater and nobler Canning. That Canning was wise in declining to take the leadership of the House of Commons, subject to the occasional visitations of Fox 'to see that things were going on right,' no one who has witnessed the effects of somewhat similar arrangements in our recent parliamentary history can doubt. Fox's temper was large and generous, but Canning's was sensitive and irritable, and did not brook control even in positions more easily manageable than that which was proposed.

Fox's health continued to decline. He told Grey shortly after taking office that there were two things

on which his mind was set—the abolition of the slave trade and the establishment of an honourable and durable peace. The first he put in train for accomplishment, declaring that in contributing to it he felt that his forty years of public life had not been spent in vain. Happily, perhaps, for him, he did not live to see, though he must have foreseen, the failure of the negotiations for peace which he had set on foot. He had come up to Downing Street in September, but he could not bear the journey back to St. Anne's. He broke it at Chiswick, staying at the Duke of Devonshire's villa, where he died in the very room in which, about twenty years later, Canning, whose political fortunes and future were so closely involved in his, breathed his last.

Fox died on September 13, 1806. While Fox was still living, Grenville reopened communication with Canning for a reconstruction of the Ministry on a larger scale than he had thought practicable in June. The first proposal had been a seat in the Cabinet for Canning, a law office for Perceval, and a Privy Councillor's place for whomsoever Canning should name. Afterwards, at Lord Grenville's request, Canning sent in a list of persons 'not who must all have offices, but among whom such offices as could be opened must be distributed, and of whom such as were not included in the distribution must nevertheless be consulted, and excluded only by their own consent.' The list was larger than Lord Grenville had anticipated, and he regarded the pretensions it set forth as extravagant. Two, or at most three, seats in the Cabinet (including Fox's) were all that he thought he could dispose of. Canning did not expect Fox's office for himself; that,

he thought, would be given by Grenville to his brother Thomas, now for the first time brought into the Ministry. The seats to be distributed among Canning and his friends were the Presidency of the Council, which Lord Fitzwilliam might be willing to give up, and the Presidency of the Board of Control, and possibly the Secretaryship at War, at the moment held by Lord Minto and General Fitzpatrick respectively without Cabinet rank. Nobody but Lord Fitzwilliam had any thought, according to Canning, of moving. The retention of Lord Ellenborough, of Windham, whom as War Minister Canning had attacked and mercilessly ridiculed, and of the Doctor was unacceptable to him. Canning insisted on five seats in the Cabinet. One of them, without office, he destined for Lord Eldon, whom he thought sufficiently paid by his ex-Chancellor's pension of 4,000*l.* a year; Lord Chatham (as his father's son and his brother's brother) was to have another; 'Castlereagh and myself in the House of Commons (even if Yorke could be omitted) make four, and Liverpool or Westmoreland must be the fifth.' 'Less than this,' Canning said, 'he could not propose to his friends;' and he proposed even this with the assurance that it would be too much for Grenville, as it proved to be. Lord Malmesbury was in ecstasies with the disinterested conduct of Canning. He considered that Grenville's proposals were simply intended to disunite Pitt's friends, and that Canning had behaved nobly in rejecting, from principle, the splendid offers which were made to him. Grenville was reduced by these refusals to follow the course to which Pitt had been driven just before his death, and to strengthen himself from his own

side. Lord Howick (Grey), Fox's most intimate political friend, succeeded his chief as Foreign Secretary. Thomas Grenville took Howick's place at the Admiralty; Lord Fitzwilliam gave up the Presidency of the Council for a seat in the Cabinet without office; Lord Sidmouth becoming Lord President, and vacating the office of Privy Seal for Fox's nephew, Lord Holland. On the failure of the negotiations with France Ministers appealed to the country. They met the new Parliament on December 15, 1806, with an increased majority. The Whigs, who had opposed what was in its origin a war of aggression and territorial spoliation by the monarchs of Europe against Republican France, in denial of her right to choose her own form of government, now with perfect consistency opposed the aggression of Imperial France on the liberties and independence of Europe. Mr. Fox had strongly insisted on the maintenance of the *uti possidetis* principle, which was the original basis of negotiations. Napoleon, departing from this basis, insisted that, while France kept what she had won, England should surrender her conquests, or nearly all of them. The Ministry seemed to have a long career before it, but it was doomed to perish. It was the King's hand which destroyed the King's Government. As he had overthrown the Portland Ministry in 1782 and the Pitt Ministry in 1801, so now, in 1807, he overturned the Grenville Ministry. Partly in obedience to what he deemed sound principles, partly with the view of uniting all the subjects of the King in resistance to the common enemy, Lord Howick brought in a Bill removing certain restrictions upon Roman Catholic service and promotion in the army.

The old steward, whose business it was to play spy on the new servants, gave the alarm. Lord Sidmouth sent in his resignation. The measure had been insufficiently explained to the King. When he learned its real character he insisted on its withdrawal, and required from his Ministers a pledge not to raise the Catholic question in future. On their refusal they were dismissed. This was on March 25, 1807, the day on which the Bill for the abolition of the slave trade—the great achievement of the Grenville-Fox Administration—received the royal assent.

Canning had been specially bitter in his hostility to the Ministry, which, as Fox politely said, could certainly not claim in his absence the title of 'All the Talents!' He showed the thoroughness of his hostility by moving, in December 1806, an entirely new Address as an amendment upon the Address. He attacked Mr. Windham's army schemes as invasions of the royal prerogative. There was something like a revival of the old institution of the King's friends. The Court was whispered to be hostile to the Ministry. The members of the Household were ostentatiously slack in supporting it. The cry that party connections and great families oppressed the King was heard once more. 'Mr. Pitt's friends,' so called to distinguish them from the Addingtonian Tories, were disunited in that character by the conflicting pretensions of Castlereagh, Perceval, and Canning, but they were united as Mr. Fox's enemies. If Lord Howick's Bill had not afforded a pretext for the dismissal of the Ministry another would have been found.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PORTLAND ADMINISTRATION—MR. CANNING FOREIGN SECRETARY.

THE Duke of Portland had written to the King, saying that he hoped he should not offend his Majesty if he opposed Lord Howick's Catholic Relief Bill, and offering his services to the King in forming a new Administration if it was thought he could be of any use. In spite of his numerous infirmities he was prepared, he said, to serve the King devotedly and faithfully to the end of his existence. Lord Malmesbury made himself active in the business, and Canning was not behindhand. 'Canning,' Malmesbury writes, 'speaks as if the choice of Cabinet places was at his disposal, and vowed with a threat that he would never sit in the same Cabinet with Addington.' Malmesbury describes a conversation with Canning at his chambers in the Albany, 'settling administrations, castles in the air.' The impression made by Canning on Malmesbury at that time was not altogether favourable. Though clever and plausible, he was not yet, he says, a statesman, and his habit of quizzing was a dangerous one. 'Spoiled as he has been, feared and wanted as he finds himself, no place is high enough for him; his ambition

rises beyond this visible diurnal sphere.' Yet Canning, the man certainly of the highest political genius and parliamentary eminence whom England has produced since Pitt and Fox, had up to this time been outside the Cabinet, into which Lord Castlereagh had been introduced before him, and into which Lord Henry Petty entered with the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer at the age of twenty-five. His impatience and eagerness now were not unnatural. The King expressed his readiness to leave everything to the Duke of Portland, with the reservations which usually follow this unconditional surrender. Lord Westmoreland, a part of the furniture of almost every Cabinet for a quarter of a century, must have a place, and Lord Charles Somerset must be provided for—his claim being that his wife, formerly a Miss Courtney, was a favourite of the princesses, and spoke the English of Parson Trulliber. Out of respect for the memory of the late Mr. Pitt, the King desired that Lord Chatham should be consulted in the formation of the Ministry. With these trifling restrictions, the Duke of Portland was free to dispose of everything as he pleased. Lord Chatham was the mere mask of a statesman, bearing a close resemblance in appearance to his illustrious father, but such a resemblance as a waxwork figure shows to its original. What he was in the Walcheren Expedition he was in politics, holding high place without capacity, and without consciousness of incapacity, to fill it—luxurious, indolent, and mindless. Canning was offered by the Duke his choice between the Foreign Office and the Admiralty. He would have ceded the Foreign Office to Wellesley or Lord Malmesbury if

either of them would have taken it, but he properly declined to waive his claims to men who, like Lord Chichester, were merely 'old hacks of office.' Lord Malmesbury advised him to take the Foreign Department, and, on his returning to the Duke of Portland to intimate his acceptance of it, he was carried by him straightway to the Queen's house at Windsor to kiss hands. Lord Hawkesbury became Home Secretary; Lord Castlereagh Colonial and War Secretary (as in Pitt's second Administration); and Perceval Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the leadership in the House of Commons. Outside the Cabinet Huskisson held the office of Secretary of the Treasury, and Sir Arthur Wellesley was Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Of all the Ministerial appointments, that of Canning —probably the best of them all—was the most severely criticised. He was gratified, however, by the reception of 'a very gracious communication' from the Dean of Christ Church. Whether or not Canning had carried out his project of learning French beyond the point of being able to swear at a waiter and call a cab does not appear. In his letter to Lord Boringdon while he was Under Secretary, he admits that he could not write it. Now the accusation, well or ill founded, was that he could not speak it. To attack the French of a Foreign Minister is like attacking the chastity of a woman, the courage of a soldier, or the orthodoxy of a clergyman. The satire of the newspapers was directed mainly to this point. Canning is described as unable to make out who a certain 'Monsieur Nong-tong-paw' is to whom he is referred whenever he speaks French. He is told to

Brush up your very best jokes, I pray ;
And though you can't speak any French, they say,
Why, as for that matter,
Fitzharris can chatter,
And you may keep out of the way.

Lord Fitzharris was Lord Malmesbury's son, and Canning's under secretary. Canning has

The gift of lungs,
Without, alas, the gift of tongues.

The 'Morning Chronicle,' which was the principal vehicle of these attacks, published an elaborate account of a misunderstanding which had arisen between M. Alopeus, the Russian Minister, who knew every modern language but English, and Mr. Canning, who knew no modern language but English. 'The conference was on the point of breaking up *re infecta*, but his Excellency M. Alopeus, making one further effort—it is supposed in Latin—by frequently vociferating the word "Oroom, oroom!" and accompanying the explanation with the significant action of turning out the inside of his breeches-pockets with a view, it would seem, of proving them to be both empty, our Minister, whose acuteness has never been doubted, concluded that "aurum" was the word M. Alopeus wished to pronounce, and that the exhibition of the empty breeches-pockets implied the demand of a subsidy for our magnanimous ally his Imperial Majesty. The question of a subsidy for Russia is therefore now believed to be under the consideration of the new Cabinet.' M. Ragout, who had formerly been 'Chef de Cuisine and Premier Ministre to Milor Hardvic in Ireland,'

and afterwards in 'le confiance of M. le Docteur à Dindon (Addington), dans la rue de Downing Street à Londres,' writes to announce that he has become Chef de Cuisine to Milor le Secrétaire Caningue. 'He is ver fine Ministre, but he play de very Diable in de Bureau of de Affaires Étrangères. He no understand one word of Français.' It is officially announced that 'Mr. Canning has taken several lessons of the Duke of Portland's cook, and can already conjugate the verb *être*.' In the report of a Ministerial dinner, it is stated that 'about eleven o'clock the company became rather turbulent, Mr. Canning having seriously differed with Sir William Grant respecting the accurate pronunciation of the word *paroissial*, which Mr. Canning insisted should be uttered like "parasol." Sir William, becoming very warm,' &c. In a box which Mr. Canning's messenger is supposed to have left behind him in a hackney-coach, are found, among other things, a new French grammar and Boyer's Dictionary abridged, French and English, with two French exercises in manuscript.

Canning complained bitterly of the disorganised condition of the Foreign Office when he entered it. The abuses were great. Whether from carelessness or from treachery, there was absolutely no secrecy. The messengers were idle and talkative, and the circulation of documents, always dangerous, was especially so in such a Cabinet as that over which the Duke of Portland failed to preside. Canning did not, perhaps, recall the memory of the time when Lord Grenville made the same complaints as he did now, of the want of good faith and reticence in the Foreign Office and in the

Cabinet, when a resolution of silence was passed to tie up Pitt's tongue, and when Canning himself was the medium of communications to the press, with the intention of thwarting Grenville himself. He had no assistance from the Duke of Portland, whose appointment was in direct opposition to Pitt's principle that the real Minister should be the ostensible Minister also, and to that which Canning presently evolved for his own benefit, that the Prime Minister should be in the House of Commons. The Duke's colleagues set up on their own account, taking upon themselves functions which really belonged to him, apparently without his resenting it or even perceiving it. He fell into fits of dead silence when any point was raised, and had not a single supporter in the Cabinet upon whom he could rely in the improbable event of his venturing to contest any point. Lord Chatham took airs upon himself as his associate in the formation of the Government, and Lord Hawkesbury and Lord Eldon were more in the confidence of the King than the Duke. Portland suffered agonies from stone, and any attempt to concentrate his attention, whether in reading or in listening, sent him to sleep.

Under such a Prime Minister, unhindered by him if unsupported by him, Canning had a free hand in foreign affairs. He held office for somewhat less than two years and a half—from March 25, 1807, to September 9, 1809. The period was marked by great events, and Canning played a great part in them. The defeat of the Russian army at Friedland led to the meeting of the Emperors, Napoleon and Alexander, on the raft moored in the Niemen. The Treaty of

Tilsit with its secret articles was the result, to which Canning replied by the seizure of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen and its transportation to England. The Berlin decree, and the Order in Council which combated it, had been issued during the Grenville Administration. It was under Canning's Foreign Secretaryship that the further Orders in Council were framed which led to the Milan decree—the one intended to cut off British trade with the Continent, the other to shut out from the Continent all articles carried in vessels which had not touched at a British port. The commencement of the Peninsular War and of the great career of Wellington as a European soldier—that is to say, the beginning of the end of the Napoleonic tyranny—was due to Mr. Canning's genius and boldness in the direction of foreign policy. Personal and ministerial complications, in part owing to the imbecility of the nominal chief of the Government, in part to Canning's perception of the real exigencies of the time and to the insufficiency of his colleagues to meet them, in part to his own too restless and eager ambition, prevented his being the Minister to complete the work he had begun. They made him an exile from power at a time when two years of office were, to use his own phrase, worth ten years of life. But he laid the foundation of the edifice which others built, and sowed the seeds of which others reaped and garnered the harvest.

A secret article of the Treaty of Tilsit, by which Russia and France agreed to make common cause against their respective enemies, and especially against England, is said to have arranged for the occupation of Denmark by French troops and for the seizure of the

Danish fleet by Napoleon, for the purpose of destroying the supremacy of England on the sea and of invading the country. The Crown Prince of Denmark acquiesced in this proposal, which had been made to the Regent of Portugal also, and declined by him. If this measure had been effected, all the navies of Europe would practically have been converted into a French fleet. The overture addressed to Portugal was disclosed to the Prince of Wales, who informed the Duke of Portland of it at an audience in Carlton House. By some means (what they were he never would reveal) Mr. Canning was made aware of the project of handing over the Danish fleet to France, and of the acquiescence of the Crown Prince of Denmark in the design. He resolved to be beforehand with the enemy. A British fleet, under Lord Gambier, with transports conveying land troops, entered the Sound. A special envoy was sent to the Crown Prince, informing him that the secret article of the Treaty of Tilsit had come to the knowledge of the English Government, and demanding the surrender of his fleet to Lord Gambier, to be by him conveyed into English ports, and to be there kept in safety until peace should be concluded between England on the one side and France and Russia on the other, when it would be restored in sound condition. Such a demand as this, though it may have been right to make and enforce it, could not be granted without ignominy. It was refused. After a four days' bombardment of Copenhagen, in which the city was set on fire, the fleet and arsenal were surrendered.

How Mr. Canning became aware of the scheme which he thus defeated is one of the puzzles of history,

like the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask and the authorship of Junius. According to Mr. Stapleton ('George Canning and his Times,' p. 105), 'an individual was concealed behind a curtain of the tent' [on the raft on the Niemen], 'and then and there heard Napoleon propose to Alexander, and Alexander consent to the proposition, that the French should take possession of the powerful fleet of Denmark, which was lying in the waters of Copenhagen. The individual who thus acquired a knowledge of the bargain lost no time in communicating it to the British Government, and gave such proofs of the accuracy of his intelligence as left no doubt of its truth in Mr. Canning's mind.' Mr. Stapleton was in later years Canning's private secretary. Canning sometimes confided in him; perhaps sometimes with the disposition to quiz which Malmesbury deplored, he hoaxed him. The story reads like a translation of events into the action of the theatre. As on the stage a war between rival countries is represented by making the kings fight in person, so the discovery of an intrigue is made obvious to the eye and mind by introducing a listener behind a curtain. According to Fouché, Napoleon, whose outburst of rage when he heard of what had happened at Copenhagen was terrible, suspected Talleyrand of selling the information as to the secret article. If the accounts of our Secret Service Fund were kept they might throw some light on the matter. Canning may have recollected the negotiations ten years before with the representatives of the French Directory at Lisle, when for 200,000*l.* Talleyrand was willing, as Lord Malmesbury reported, to secure to England any of the Dutch colonies.

The conduct of Mr. Canning was attacked in both Houses of Parliament as a violation of the principles of international law and morality. But the attack was indirect; it resolved itself into the assertion that the information before the House did not give sufficient grounds for the action of the Government. It was admitted practically that England was not bound to perish with Puffendorff if she could be saved only without him. This was the substance of the motion brought forward by Mr. George Ponsonby, formerly Lord Chancellor of Ireland, now, in virtue of his relationship to Lord Grey, leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, the hero, or victim, later, of Lord Palmerston's squib, 'The Trial of Henry Brougham for calling the Right Hon. George Ponsonby an Old Woman.' Canning's reply was simple. It was in substance this: If you will not acquit us without further evidence, condemn us; for we will never disclose the source of our information. This language goes far to refute the theory of the accidental man behind the tent curtain. It is probable that the information came from someone highly placed in French or Russian political life, and highly paid by England. The Emperor Alexander privately expressed his satisfaction at what had happened at Copenhagen, but it is not legitimate to infer from this that he was a party to the disclosure as well as to the secret.

The refusal of the Prince Regent of Portugal to lend his fleet to the maritime coalition against England brought upon him the Napoleonic decree: 'The House of Braganza has ceased to reign.' Portugal was to be dismembered and divided between France and Spain.

Spain had become, under the vassal monarchy of Joseph Bonaparte, practically a province of the Empire, which thus dominated the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. The Spaniards rose in rebellion, in the name of Ferdinand VII., now a prisoner at Bayonne. The rising, however, was national and not dynastic. Canning saw that to come to the help of the Spanish people was the best means of carrying on the war against France. The invasion of England was still Napoleon's dream, and all his measures were directed towards organising that dream into a reality. It was not in any crusading or knight-errant spirit, but in one of self-defence, that Canning welcomed the Spanish revolt and sent Sir Arthur Wellesley to Corunna to aid and to organise it. The Spaniards were, perhaps, not unnaturally distrustful of the part which England, hitherto at war with them, intended to play in the struggle. They asked for arms and money, but they did not want English soldiers, and they requested that Wellesley should confine himself to clearing the French out of Portugal. Practically this was done on August 21, 1808, when the battle of Vimiera was fought and won. The Convention of Cintra followed, which, allowing the French to evacuate Portugal with their arms and with the property which they had plundered from the Portuguese, half undid the victory. Though Wellesley signed the convention he disapproved it, and his name was appended to it merely as a matter of form in obedience to the two generals who had been placed over his head, Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard. This, happily, was the last of these examples of the principle of command in virtue of seniority.

To Canning the Convention of Cintra was a bitter mortification. It was disapproved by everybody in England; the King himself censured it; but it could not be undone. Some decision in respect to it—what is not very clear—which was taken in the Cabinet during Canning's absence, was the beginning of that quarrel with Lord Castlereagh which led to the duel on Putney Heath and to Canning's banishment from official life during the six momentous years of war which preceded the settlement of Europe by the Treaty of Vienna. Canning and Castlereagh carried on a conflict of memoranda on the subject of the convention. Canning contended that as the King could not himself plunder his allies, his generals could not authorise their plunder, and that the article on this subject must be annulled. Castlereagh, equally disapproving the stipulation, held that, having been made, it was valid. It is probable that in any case Canning would have quarrelled with Castlereagh sooner or later, as he had done before with Addington, and as he did afterwards with Perceval and Wellington. The essential generosity and nobleness of the man's nature were marred by a certain eagerness and paltriness of self-assertion which could not tolerate delay in the recognition of the claims of the highest genius to the highest place, and which involved him in many unworthy wrangles, if not in still more unworthy intrigues.

The melancholy fate of Sir John Moore, who was chief in command in Portugal, makes Canning's controversy with him—a controversy which survived Moore's death—a painful passage in the statesman's life. Moore, personally courageous, was constitutionally

desponding. He was hopeless of success in the enterprise which had been entrusted to him, and Canning, knowing Moore's feeling on the subject, saw in this anticipation of disaster the prophecy of its accomplishment. 'Remember, my lord,' said Moore, on his setting out, to Castlereagh, who was War Minister, 'I protest against the expedition and foretell its failure.' On Castlereagh's repeating this in the Cabinet, Canning's indignation broke forth: 'Good God! and do you really mean to say that you allowed a man entertaining such feelings with regard to the expedition to go out and assume the command of it?' After the Convention of Cintra, which restored to him forces, arms, and wealth which might have been annihilated, and in the absence of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had kept the Irish Office while he was in Portugal, Napoleon was proceeding from victory to victory in Spain. Sir John Moore, waiting for men from England, was inactive. Canning's impatience was extreme. His friend Hookham Frere, who was now accredited as British Minister to the Central Junta in Spain, called on Moore to advance on Madrid, confident in his being able to make himself master of the city before the French could get there. Moore obeyed in the hopeless and foreboding spirit which seems to have now taken possession of him. 'I mean,' said Moore, 'to proceed bridle in hand, for if the bubble bursts and Madrid falls we shall have to run for it.' The bubble burst, Madrid fell, and Sir John Moore began his retreat to Corunna, harassed by the gathering and combined forces of Napoleon and Soult. He effected his retreat skilfully, and secured the embarkation of his troops, and, as all

the world knows, fell himself in a death happier than his recent fortunes had been, or than his future life possibly would have been if he had survived.

The prophecy in Wolfe's lines—

> Little they'll reck of the spirit that's gone,
> And o'er his coldashes upbraid him—

like most prophecies, was descriptive, and was probably suggested by Canning's language and his attitude towards the slain hero. Canning thought Moore might have succeeded where he failed, and he defended Hookham Frere's summons of him to Madrid, which Sir William Napier, in his 'History of the Peninsular War,' has denounced as dictated by 'weakness, arrogance, levity, and ignorance.' A newspaper poet in the 'British Press,' parodying Campbell's 'Hohenlinden' in 'The Battle of Putney,' as he calls the duel between Castlereagh and Canning, refers to Canning's possible fate and Moore's:—

> But if he falls, will e'er he meet
> A nation's woe, that solace sweet,
> When he beneath the winding-sheet
> Has stabbed a soldier's memory?

The appointment, due to Canning's agency, of Sir Arthur Wellesley to the chief command in the Peninsula, and the nomination of his brother, the Marquis Wellesley, as British Minister to the Junta, set a new face on matters military and civil. Wellington won battle after battle, and Wellesley contributed to the political reorganisation of Spain. Encouraged by the head which was being made against Napoleon, Austria plucked up heart, and for the fourth time took up arms

against France. In order to effect a diversion on her behalf the expedition to the Scheldt was determined on, and Lord Chatham, as if to give him an opportunity of showing that he combined military with political incapacity, was placed at its head. It is unnecessary to tell the heartrending story of mismanagement and failure, of fever and pestilence. The lines often quoted, and almost as often misquoted, in which the attitude of the two British commanders is described, are as truly historic as anything in Cæsar or Napier. They were printed first in the 'Morning Chronicle' of February 6, 1810, as 'an abstract and brief chronicle of the documents and evidence concerning the expedition to the Scheldt:'—

> Lord Chatham, with his sword undrawn,
> Kept waiting for Sir Richard Strachan,
> Sir Richard, eager to be at 'em,
> Kept waiting too,—for whom? Lord Chatham.

Canning showed during his first tenure of high office the qualities of a great Foreign Minister and a great War Minister. The seizure of the Danish fleet, technically brigandage, was a splendid audacity of patriotism. To Canning, too, the glory belongs of seeing that France was to be conquered in Spain, and of equipping the conqueror for his task. Canning, Wellington, the Peninsular War; Castlereagh, Chatham (the Second), the Walcheren expedition: these names are decisive of the controversy between the political rivals.

CHAPTER XV.

CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, AND PERCEVAL.

CANNING, long before the organisation of humiliation at Walcheren, had come to the conclusion that Lord Castlereagh had not the qualities necessary in a War Minister. In a letter to the Duke of Portland he said that a change either in his own department or in that of Castlereagh was essential, and that he might be himself no obstacle to the change he offered to resign. But there can be no doubt that the Duke of Portland correctly described his real motive, when writing to Lord Eldon he said: 'The great object, and indeed the *sine quâ non*, with Canning is to take from Lord Castlereagh the conduct of the war.' The Duke of Portland was vacillation and timidity itself. He hated a broil, and while promising to communicate Canning's proposal to Castlereagh through Lord Camden, Castlereagh's uncle, both he and Camden kept silence about the matter. Canning's project was that Lord Wellesley should be War Minister and that Castlereagh should have some other Cabinet post. This scheme was assented to by the King, and communicated to Lord Camden, to Lord Eldon, and to Lord Bathurst, but not to Lord Castlereagh, to whom, however, Canning thought that it had been made known. Nothing was done, and Canning grew tired of waiting. He

spoke to George Rose and the Speaker (Abbot) on the subject. The Duke of Portland, gathering probably that the matter was being stirred, took Perceval, then leader of the House of Commons, into his confidence. The Walcheren expedition was then being organised and was on the point of execution, and Perceval thought that the superintendence of it could not properly or safely be withdrawn from Castlereagh's hands. He wrote to Canning in this sense, and Canning, while protesting against complicity in the past concealment, and denying knowledge until a certain date that there had been concealment, acquiesced in an adjournment of the matter till the Scheldt expedition was over. This personal controversy was complicated by another. The declining physical and mental health of the Duke of Portland made his speedy resignation of the Premiership inevitable. Perceval and Canning discussed the matter of the succession to Portland with great freedom and minuteness, Canning insisting on his own claim not in so many words, but advancing to it by a series of steps. 'There must,' he wrote to Perceval, 'be a Minister'—the Duke of Portland having been only a dummy or phantasm-Minister —'that Minister must be in the House of Commons; he must be either you (Perceval) or myself (Canning)' —Castlereagh, apparently, not being to be thought of, though that would have solved the War Office difficulty—'and if I can prevent it it shall not,' Canning added in effect, 'be you.' 'I am not so presumptuous as to expect that you should acquiesce in that choice falling on me. On the other hand, I hope and trust that you will not consider it as any want of esteem and kind-

ness on my part (than which I do assure you nothing, &c.) if I should not think it possible to remain in office under the change which would instantly be produced in my situation by the appointment of a First Minister in the House of Commons—even in your person.' Perceval replied, modestly enough, that nothing could be more natural than that Canning should desire his great personal superiority to be officially marked. Still Perceval could not acquiesce in his own removal from his present office and situation—the Chancellorship of the Exchequer with leadership of the House of Commons. All things considered, the nomination of a third person was in his view preferable to the breaking up of the Government. Canning himself had at one time pointed to Lord Chatham as the man under whom he would be prepared to serve. But Lord Chatham was coming home disgraced by the failure of the Walcheren expedition. Canning not unjustly saw in the breakdown a confirmation of his opinion as to the necessity of removing Lord Castlereagh from the War Office, and wrote to the Duke of Portland insisting that the time had come for the King to give effect to his promise to call Lord Wellesley to that department. The Duke saw Canning, and proposed that simultaneously with his resignation of the Treasury Castlereagh should be shifted to some other office than the War Department. This was what was at first intended, and Canning acquiesced. But he was bent on being First Minister, and, this being out of the question, he felt bound to ask the Duke to convey with his resignation Canning's own also. He absented himself from the next Cabinet—in the circumstances of the case

a critical one. Castlereagh was puzzled, and inquired the reason. The whole secret came out. Lord Camden told Castlereagh what he ought to have told him months before.

Canning wrote once more to the Duke of Portland, admitting that, while he could not consent to serve under Perceval, he could even less expect Perceval to reverse the relations which had existed between them by serving under him, and expressing the greatest personal goodwill to him. But whether he (Perceval) or any third person was to be First Minister, anything, he said, would be better than a 'Government of compromise, of uncertain preponderance and divided responsibility.' Canning's conduct has been denounced as treacherous. But he had openly declared to Perceval his pretensions to the post of First Minister, and the fact that he suggested to one friend that Perceval might be Lord President with a peerage and the Chancellorship of the Duchy for life, and to another—the Duke of Portland—that he might be Lord Chancellor, do not seem enormities of bad faith. This last proposal the Duke innocently made known to Lord Eldon, 'who was outrageous at it.' It accounts for the almost venomous hatred which breaks out whenever, in his letters, Eldon mentions Canning's name. Perceval could not be forced into the House of Lords if he did not want to go there. He had given up law for politics —the Attorney-Generalship for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer—with regret, and he might conceivably have been desirous of a position independent of political accidents. However this may be, the arrangement proposed by Canning had nothing wicked in it, and might quite conceivably have been the basis of an

accommodation. A certain want of delicacy and nice scruple may, perhaps, be imputed to Canning in his relations with both Perceval and Castlereagh now, as with Grenville and Addington before, but of direct treachery and bad faith there is no evidence or even reasonable suspicion.

Castlereagh, while admitting Canning's right to demand his removal if he thought that the public interest required it, impugned as unfair and dishonourable the secrecy which had been observed. But the secrecy was not Canning's, but Portland's and Camden's. A challenge was sent by Castlereagh under conditions which even the then recognised code of duelling honour held insufficient, and was accepted by Canning. The antagonists met at Wimbledon, Lord Castlereagh being accompanied by Lord Yarmouth (afterwards the Marquis of Hertford), Mr. Canning by Mr. Charles Ellis (afterwards Lord Seaforth), who was so nervous that he could not load Canning's pistol. The first exchange of shots was harmless. In the second, Mr. Canning was struck in the thigh. The dangerous accuracy of his own aim was proved, it is said, by his shooting a button off Lord Castlereagh's coat as he stood sideways. The contemporary bard of 'The Battle of Putney' thus sung the encounter:—

On Putney, when the sun was low,
The misty vapours, hovering slow,
We mark'd the chariot rattling go,
Of Canning driving rapidly.

But Putney saw a stranger sight,
When Castlereagh burst forth to light,
Who came clean-handed forth to fight
His former friend's sincerity.

The seconds fixed the rivals' place,
Each statesman seized the deadly case,
And one had laughed to see the face
Of Ellis, grinning horridly.

The dreaded sign the seconds gave,
But Doodle hit not Noodle grave,
And Noodle's shot at Doodle brave
Whisked by right harmlessly.

But once again must Putney's heath
Re-echo back the arms of death ;
But ne'er before did History's breath
Record such deep duplicity.

'Tis true that not their country's weal,
Or monarch's honour could unsteel
Or make the rancorous bosom feel
Of either Secretary.

The signal drops, the bullets fly ;
'Haste, Ellis, haste, nay, do not cry,
He yet may roll the poet's eye,
And still may feed his relatives.'

The last line contains a taunt, which was the commonplace of the satirists and libellers of the period, from Peter Pindar downwards, on the most honourable feature of Canning's life—his constant affection for his mother and his devoted attention to her, shown not simply in gifts but in assiduous personal cares.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PERCEVAL MINISTRY—CANNING OUT OF OFFICE.

THE Government had lost its head in Portland and its right and left hand in Canning and Castlereagh. The resignation of Canning's friends, Leveson-Gower, Sturges Bourne, Huskisson, Rose, and Long—the four latter the business men of the Ministry, as Lord Eldon described them—followed, though George Rose afterwards changed his mind. Canning, in a conversation with the King, which his Majesty described as the most extraordinary he had ever borne part in, while pointing to the formation of a Government under Perceval as the most rational course to adopt, had offered to undertake the task should his Majesty be pleased to lay his commands upon him. The offer was not accepted.

After unsuccessful negotiations with Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, the Cabinet advised the King at once to fill up the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and Lord Eldon was authorised to express orally to his Majesty the unanimous opinion of his colleagues that the new Minister ought to be in the House of Commons. This was in so many words to designate Mr. Perceval, since Canning and Castlereagh, his only possible rivals, were out of the question.

Mr. Perceval was thus entrusted with the task of reconstructing the Administration. After offering the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in succession to Robert Milnes, Lord Palmerston, George Rose, Vansittart, and Charles Long, who all refused it, Perceval was constrained to keep it himself, in conjunction with the First Lordship of the Treasury. The Cabinet received only one notable addition, and that was scarcely a gain: the Marquis Wellesley became Foreign Secretary in succession to Canning. Lord Liverpool went to the War and Colonial Office in lieu of Lord Castlereagh; and Richard Ryder, a brother of the Lord Harrowby of that day, took the place of Lord Liverpool at the Home Office. Lord Palmerston became Secretary at War in succession to Lord G. Leveson-Gower, but without a seat in the Cabinet. The appointment of Lord Wellesley was rather a surprise to Canning, by whom he had been sent as British Minister to Spain. Wellesley considered his tenure of this office conditional on Canning remaining Foreign Secretary, and had left his resignation in Canning's hands, to be tendered by him in the event of his own resignation. Canning presented them both to the King, and recommended Hookham Frere as Wellesley's successor in Madrid. If these steps were taken, as Canning's enemies alleged, without the cognisance and consent of the colleagues from whom he was parting, they perhaps involve a little sharp practice. The tables were turned upon him. Learning from the King what had happened, Perceval arranged that the vessel which carried to Wellesley the news of Canning's resignation and of his own release from his diplomatic post at

Madrid should bring him the offer of the Secretaryship of State, which Canning had quitted. Wellesley promptly accepted it.

Without being either orator or statesman, Perceval was a good man of business and a dexterous debater; but his only Cabinet colleagues in the Commons, Yorke and Ryder, were ineffective. A vote of censure on Lord Chatham's conduct as commander of the Scheldt expedition was followed rather tardily, and under pressure, by his resignation of the office of Master-General of the Ordnance. This resignation led to a new effort to strengthen the Perceval Cabinet. Lord Wellesley proposed that overtures should be made to Canning, Sidmouth, and Castlereagh. To make room for them Lord Camden was ready to give up the Privy Seal, Ryder the Home Office, and Perceval himself the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. But Sidmouth obstinately refused to sit in the same Cabinet with Canning, and Wellesley would not hear of Sidmouth and Castlereagh without Canning. The Government was, therefore, fain to patch up the vacancies as best it could, and to blunder on as it had been doing. Lord Mulgrave succeeded Lord Chatham at the Ordnance Office, and Charles Yorke took the Admiralty from Lord Mulgrave.

Canning was not very active in debate in the session of 1810. Besides the speeches to which a reference has been made, he spoke energetically in favour of the grant to Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had been raised to the peerage as Viscount Wellington after the battle of Talavera, and supported Sir Samuel Romilly's effort for the release of Gale Jones, imprisoned for the publication

of a placard offensive to the House of Commons. He spoke in favour of Mr. Bankes' motion against sinecures, which by his aid was carried against the Government, and led to the appointment of a Committee. Feeling bound, perhaps, not to promote a measure which had already disturbed the reason of the King, he opposed Grattan's motion in favour of Roman Catholic relief. In speaking in favour of the vote of credit for which the Government asked, he surveyed the field of war and of policy, retrospectively justifying his own measures as Foreign Minister, and carefully separating his support of the Executive Government, as the Executive Government, from the question of personal confidence.

The close of the year 1810 was marked by the constantly returning trouble of George III.'s life. In October of that year his mental faculties again gave way. Domestic distress had, no doubt, hastened this affliction. In 1809, the Duke of York, his favourite son, had been forced to resign the Commandership-in-Chief of the Army in circumstances of scandal painful to the rigid morality of the King, though the charge of venality broke down. In 1810, the murder of the Duke of Cumberland's valet, Stella, made that unpopular Prince the mark of grave imputations. The illness of the Princess Amelia, and the anxiety which it occasioned the King, seem, however, to have been the proximate cause of the returning malady. His reason gave way before her life. The first business of Parliament, which met on November 1, was to pass a Regency Bill. Mr. Perceval's measure was a reproduction of that proposed by Mr. Pitt in 1788. It conferred the Regency upon the Prince of Wales, but subject to the

restrictions which he had intensely resented twenty years before, and which, imposed by the English Parliament, and refused by the Irish, might, but for the King's recovery, have raised the question of the Parliamentary Union twelve years before it actually emerged. The old Whig contention, or rather the anti-Whig contention of the Fox Whigs of that year, that the Prince had an hereditary right to the Regency, independent of parliamentary nomination, was now renewed, but without much vigour. The restrictions on the creation of peers and the control given to the Queen over the royal household, on which Mr. Pitt had insisted, were maintained by Perceval. Mr. Canning asserted with emphasis Pitt's doctrine of the control of Parliament, but demurred to the necessity of its being exercised in the same way. The principle sound in 1788 was equally sound in 1810 and for all time, but the mode of enforcing it was a question of present circumstance and convenience, not involving principle and independent of precedent. Now, he contended, the need was urgent of a strong Executive Government, which the restrictions proposed would unduly fetter. The Bill was carried, the limitations which it imposed being made valid for twelve months only, within which period the chance of the King's recovery would, it was thought, have been determined. If he were restored to health, it was important that he should find things much as he had left them. When his restoration was shown to be hopeless the need for restriction would disappear. The Prince of Wales was very angry. He thought of dismissing Perceval, and he entered into negotiations with Grey and Grenville; but the possibility of his

father's recovery determined him to leave the present Ministers in power.

When the King's illness broke out, Perceval saw the necessity of endeavouring to strengthen his weak Government against emergencies, and again opened negotiations with Canning, Castlereagh, and Sidmouth. Lord Castlereagh declined to enter the Ministry on any terms; Sidmouth was still irreconcilable with Canning, who alone, it was held, would attract more hostility than support to the Government, especially on the part of the Sidmouth Tories. Thus the negotiations broke down. The commercial distress of 1810 had led to an inquiry into the effects of an inconvertible paper currency. A committee was appointed in that year called the Bullion Committee. The report, drawn up by Mr. Horner, the chairman, recommended a return to cash payments in two years. Mr. Canning had been a member of this committee, and had closely attended to its proceedings. He spoke in the House of Commons on certain resolutions brought forward by Mr. Horner, based on the report of the committee, and again on certain counter-resolutions brought forward by Mr. Vansittart. His speeches, in which he showed his conversance with the sagacious currency doctrines, as afterwards with the free-trade principles, of his friend Huskisson, are recognised alike by men of business and theorists as masterpieces of exposition, argument, and illustration. Canning, while, however, he accepted the principles of the bullionists, to which Peel, then their opponent, afterwards became a convert, held that Parliament was bound to adhere to its contract with the Bank, deferring the resumption of cash payments

until six years after the termination of the war. The depreciation of Bank notes was due to an excessive issue of them, but a sudden contraction might be equally injurious; and the true course to be taken was, by the assertion of sound doctrines, to prepare the way for a return to them in practice. Horner's resolutions were rejected; Vansittart's, which embodied all the currency fallacies of the time, were passed.

On February 18, 1812, the restrictions imposed on the Prince Regent by the Regency Bill expired, and it was thought that he would signalise his independence by summoning his old Whig friends to office. On February 13 the Prince had written a letter to the Duke of York, in which, announcing that he had 'no predilections to indulge, no resentments to gratify,' he practically intimated his intention of keeping Mr. Perceval's Cabinet in power, though desiring that some of his early friends might join the Administration, naming especially Lord Grenville and Lord Grey. The two Whig lords declined office on the ground of incompatibility of political opinion with Perceval. On hearing of this result, Lord Wellesley tendered his resignation, and the seals of the Foreign Office were placed in the hands of Lord Castlereagh. Lord Sidmouth was appointed Lord Privy Seal in succession to Lord Camden, who remained in the Cabinet without office.

Canning does not seem to have borne any part in these projects. It must be admitted that, if he was an intriguer, he was a very unlucky one. Perceval, against whom he had pitted his own pretensions to be First Minister, had gained, and seemed firmly established in that post; Castlereagh had stepped into

the office of Foreign Minister, which Canning had held, and would have sacrificed years of his life to hold again at a time so critical. The much-ridiculed 'doctor' was in place. Canning was wandering disconsolate among the back benches of the House of Commons. To him the end of life was Parliament, and the end of Parliament was office. A parody of Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' describes his demeanour and artifices :—

For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey
A place or pension ever yet resigned ;
Quitted the Court, like Canning, as they say,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?

On some tried hack at parting he relies,
Some well-turned paragraph his case requires ;
E'en in retirement we hear his cries,
E'en in our paper linger his desires.

. . . . .

Haply some hoary pensioner may say,
Oft have we seen him at the approach of eve,
Bending with hasty steps his course this way
To make a speech would even us deceive.

There, underneath the House of Commons' clock,
That rears its vile old-fashioned head so high,
How often would he his late colleagues mock,
And at that distance catch the Speaker's eye.

From seat to seat, as if in pain or scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies would he rove ;
And, out of office, seem like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

CHAPTER XVII.

ASSASSINATION OF MR. PERCEVAL—FORMATION OF THE LIVERPOOL ADMINISTRATION.

THE bullet of the assassin brought Perceval's political and natural life to a close at the same moment. On May 11, 1812, he was shot down in the lobby of the House of Commons by Bellingham, a ruined tradesman, maddened by misfortune and by grievances which, so far as they were real, no Government could redress.

The difficulties which had confronted the Cabinet on the retirement of the Duke of Portland beset it once more. Hopeless of support from Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, Ministers opened negotiations with Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, who refused to join them —Canning because of their unwillingness to concede the Roman Catholic claims, Wellesley on this ground, and also because of their want of vigour in prosecuting the Spanish war. According to Lord Eldon, the overtures were not sincere. Wellesley and Canning might 'bite' or not. If they did not, yet to have offered them office would strengthen the Government in public opinion, and it could go on without them. But it was brought up short by a resolution promptly carried in the House of Commons, by a majority of four, on the motion of Mr. Stuart-Wortley, for an

address to the Prince Regent, praying him to take steps for the formation of a strong and efficient Administration. Ministers tendered their resignation, and the Marquis Wellesley was entrusted with the task of forming a new Government. Through Canning he sounded Lord Liverpool—who, though not formally the chief of the retiring Ministry, seems to have acted for it—as to the willingness of himself and his friends to join some Government based on the concession of Catholic claims and pledged to a strenuous prosecution of the war. The overture, which implied in the latter condition a censure as regards the past, and in the former an abandonment of the well-known principles of the majority of the Government, was refused. It cannot have been seriously made. Simultaneously with this application through Canning to Lord Liverpool, Wellesley addressed himself in person to Grey and Grenville. After protracted negotiations, in which the Whig lords insisted on a direct invitation from the Prince Regent, and on freedom to deal with the household offices, and in the later course of which Lord Moira took the place of Lord Wellesley, they too declined. According to Canning, the real objection of the Whig chiefs was to the Prince Regent's pretensions to choose his own Ministers. In a debate in the House of Commons upon these negotiations, he attributed to them in so many words the doctrine 'that the great families and connections of this country had a right to interfere in the nomination of Ministers,' and emphatically refused to admit 'any such right or pretension in the aristocracy.' The choice of Ministers, he said, belonged to the Crown, subject, of course, to the

control and advice of a free Parliament. The Prince Regent, whose conduct in this matter was not ostensibly open to blame, was now at his wits' end. He had recourse at last to a strange expedient. He asked the Cabinet to choose their own First Minister. Their choice fell upon the Earl of Liverpool, who remained in office for fifteen years.

'Lord Liverpool's first act on receiving his commission from the King was to address himself to Mr. Canning. Castlereagh was magnanimously willing to yield the Foreign Office, and it was proposed that Lord Wellesley should go to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. Canning described this offer as perhaps the handsomest that was ever made to any individual. But it was proposed that the leadership of the House of Commons, with the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, should be in Castlereagh's hands, and it required a longer time of exile from office to make any but the first place in that assembly endurable by him. He consented to hold afterwards a post very inferior to that now within his grasp. But he had not yet acquired the proper mood of submission. 'How striking,' Wilberforce moralises in his 'Diary,' 'is Canning's example! Had he fairly joined Perceval on the Duke of Portland's death, as Perceval offered, he would now have been acknowledged head, and supported as such. But his ambitious policy threw him out, and he sunk infinitely in public estimation, and has since with difficulty kept buoyant.' Canning, according to Stapleton, was willing to acquiesce in Castlereagh's having the leadership. 'The point was referred to three members of the House of Commons, who were supposed to be par-

ticularly conversant with the usages of the House; they decided that he ought to insist on the lead, and the negotiation fell to the ground.' It is obvious, however, that the 'usages of the House' have nothing to do with the matter. Canning himself, in a speech which he made at Liverpool this very year, states that the proposal was rejected because, in his own view as well as in that of his friends, it was accompanied by conditions which he could not honourably accept. Writing to Wilberforce, he took yet other ground. It was not that he insisted on the leadership, or that his friends insisted, contrary to his own view, on his not taking office without it, but that he could not take the second place without incurring suspicion of intriguing for the first. 'I will venture to affirm,' he says, 'that no offer on my part to reject for myself or to reserve for Lord C. the station of command would have prevented him from saying in three weeks that I was studiously labouring to deprive him of it. Pray, therefore, be not led astray, nor let others where you can help it, by the notion that I have been squabbling about a trifle.' But even in the compass of the same letter he is unable to be consistent. The following sentence shows that he was resolved not to take office with the lead of the House of Commons in Castlereagh's hands, and that, though he would have tried, he would probably have failed to bring himself to acquiesce in any third person having it. 'If I could have placed this power fairly *in medio* I would have conquered, or endeavoured to conquer, all my other feelings of reluctance; but to place it, and to engage to maintain it in his hands where it now is, and then to place myself under it,

would have been not only a sacrifice of pride but an extinction of utility.' It is not probable, however, that at this time the House of Commons would have accepted Canning's leadership. Castlereagh now, as Perceval before, was regarded as a safer man than Canning. It would not be fair to apply Canning's own contrast between 'placeless proud ability' and the 'statesman all civility, whom moderate talents raise to fame,' to this controversy. It was not Canning's genius which was disliked, but his imputed duplicity. It was not the mediocrity of Perceval and Castlereagh which won the confidence of the House of Commons, but their recognised integrity. Canning was regarded as an unscrupulous intriguer and audacious adventurer, Perceval and Castlereagh as men of unblemished and disinterested character. Their moral authority in council, in the House of Commons, and with the country was greater than his. Canning was misjudged, largely if not entirely; but his conduct during the past ten years, since Addington's accession to office, gave some basis, and yet more plausibility, to the judgment. Four years later, after the somewhat ignominious embassy to Lisbon, he took office under conditions more wounding to his vanity than those which he now rejected with scorn, contenting himself with the Presidency of the Board of Control, while Castlereagh led the House as Foreign Secretary. Yet six years later he sought an escape, happily not granted him, from English politics in the Governor-Generalship of India. Castlereagh's melancholy death saved him from this splendid exile, restoring to him the Foreign Office, and giving him at fifty-two the leadership of the House of

Commons, which he had deemed his right twelve years before. He became First Minister in 1827. He had declined office without the Premiership in 1809. With less haste Canning would have made greater progress. If he had manœuvred less he would much sooner have gained more. The lines in which Moore comments on the demand for further reinforcements for Wellington in the Peninsula, and proposes to despatch politicians thither, express the common idea of the fortunes and character of the rival statesmen:

> Castlereagh in our sieges might save some disgraces,
> Being used to the taking and keeping of places;
> And volunteer Canning, still ready for joining,
> Might show us his talent for sly undermining.

It is curious how this suspicion of Canning's good faith haunted him through public life, expressing itself in the misgivings of his friends not less than in the mingled hatred and contempt of his enemies. Pitt, Lord Malmesbury, and Wilberforce shake their heads over his disposition to manœuvre. Sturges Bourne, the perfect model of an upright, fair-minded Englishman, adheres to him, but deplores his trickiness. Lady Hester Stanhope charges him at the commencement of his political life with habitually sending to the newspapers what he heard from Mr. Pitt in confidential talk. Lord Shaftesbury, in his Diary, May 29, 1827, has this entry: 'Met Peel: he told me every syllable relating to Canning's intrigues.' Canning was honest and patriotic, but he stood alone, and he believed too much in the arts of management.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FOUR YEARS OUT OF OFFICE.

DURING the first four years of the Liverpool Administration, with a break occasioned by the incident of the Lisbon Embassy, Mr. Canning's position was that of a private member of Parliament. On one question, on which he felt strongly, the confirmed insanity of the King had released him from restrictions as galling as those from which the Prince Regent had escaped. He had assented, after 1801, to the rule of action laid down for himself by Pitt, and accepted by Fox in 1806, that the King, in the uncertain state of his mental health, should not be troubled by a revival of the Catholic claims. Now that there was no likelihood of his recovery, Canning felt himself relieved from this voluntarily imposed obligation of silence. He and Lord Wellesley acted together in this matter. In June 1812, Mr. Canning moved a resolution pledging the House of Commons 'early in the next session of Parliament to take into their consideration the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, with a view to their final and conciliatory adjustment.' The motion was passed by a majority of 129—235 against 106. In the House of Lords the previous question was carried against Lord Wellesley by a majority of only one.

Lord Castlereagh's presence in the Cabinet left the subject an open one with the Government, and Mr. Canning's success did not endanger the Ministry.

Parliament was dissolved in July. On September 25, 1812, a number of gentlemen met at the Golden Lion Inn, Liverpool. Mr. John Gladstone, the father of the eminent statesman, then a child three years of age, moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Richard Benson, inviting Mr. Canning to become a candidate for the borough of Liverpool. Mr. Canning, who had sat for Newtown (Hants) in the Parliament of 1806, and for Hastings in 1807, afterward notified his acceptance of the invitation in a letter bearing date October 4. On October 7 he arrived in Liverpool, and the contest began in earnest. His opponents were Mr. Brougham, whose opposition to the Orders in Council recommended him to a commercial constituency, and Mr. Creevy, a member of Parliament well known in that day as the advocate of free trade with India. Mr. Canning stood with General Gascoigne. On the sixth day's poll Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevy withdrew from the contest; but the poll was kept open until the eighth day, when Mr. Canning and General Gascoigne were declared to be elected, Mr. Canning being at the head of the poll. He was also elected for Petersfield. In his speeches on the successive declarations of each day's polling, he pronounced himself, so far as general politics were concerned, in an emphatic manner against Parliamentary Reform—even denouncing afterwards, at a congratulatory banquet in Manchester, the project of giving representatives to that town—and in favour of the removal of the political disabilities of the Roman Catholics.

The new Parliament met at the close of November 1812. It lasted till the year 1818. Mr. Canning spoke in February, 1813, in defence of the conduct of the Government in regard to the right of search and the institution, under the Orders in Council, of what was called a paper blockade, out of which the war with the United States had sprung. The controversy had begun while Mr. Canning held the seals of the Foreign Office. The United States had retorted upon France and England by passing the Non-Intercourse Act, which precluded trade between the Republic and the two belligerent powers so long as the Berlin and Milan decrees on the one hand, and the Orders in Council on the other, remained in force. In the meantime feeling on both sides had been embittered by the affair of the 'Leopard' and the 'Chesapeake,' in which the British claim to the right of search had been enforced by violent measures, involving loss of life. Mr. Canning had offered apologies and reparation for the indiscretion of the commander of the 'Leopard,' and set on foot negotiations for the re-establishment of friendly relations between the two countries. Mr. Erskine, the British Minister at Washington, misconceiving his instructions, accepted the proposal of the United States Government to withdraw the Non-Intercourse Act as regards England, on the condition of the British Government consenting to suspend the Orders as regards United States ships. He was disavowed and recalled; Mr. Canning insisted on the belligerent right to prevent neutral trading with the enemy. He equally insisted on what was called the right of impressment—that is, of searching in time of war American vessels for British seamen who had deserted

the service of their own country. The former principle, which was valid in international law when Mr. Canning contended for it, was abolished, so far as the parties to the Treaty of Paris are concerned, by the declaration of 1856, which allows a neutral flag to cover enemy's goods while exempting neutral goods under an enemy's flag from capture—excepting, in both cases, contraband of war. This, however, was not the international law nor the national opinion of Mr. Canning's days. After many irritating incidents, war was declared by the United States in June 1812. As a private member Mr. Canning defended the course which he had taken in office and that followed by his successors.

In 1813 Mr. Canning gave his support to the measure introduced by Mr. Grattan for removing Roman Catholic disabilities. He endeavoured to disarm public alarm by a fantastic scheme for appointing a commission of Roman Catholic notables and Protestant privy councillors, associated with a Secretary of State in England and the Chief Secretary in Ireland, to whom all bulls and other documents were to be communicated, under pain of banishment, by those receiving them; and who were to testify to the loyalty of persons nominated to Roman Catholic bishoprics. The Bill was defeated on the motion of the Speaker (Mr. Abbot) in Committee —Speakers in Committee in those days recovered their freedom of speech and action as members of Parliament —by 251 against 247 votes, and was withdrawn. The Bill for throwing open the India trade to the public preserved to the East India Company the monopoly of the China trade for twenty years. Mr. Canning, representing the commercial interests of Liverpool and the

commercial principles of Mr. Pitt, did not venture to do more than move (unsuccessfully) the reduction of the term of the China monopoly to ten years. He supported Lord Castlereagh's motion of thanks to Wellington (now Marquis) for the victory at Vittoria in July; and in November spoke in favour of the grant of three millions to his Majesty for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the foreign treaties.

In the election for Liverpool Mr. Canning had strongly asserted his individual independence; in the House of Commons, when he had been returned, he was soon made aware of his personal isolation. Lord Castlereagh, in spite of his halting and incoherent speech, commanded the confidence of the House by dint of character and administrative capacity. His triumph over his more eloquent and brilliant rival was complete. Canning practically gave up the struggle. He renounced concerted action with Lord Wellesley. He formally disbanded his party, bidding them, according to Whitbread's ungenerous rendering of his conduct, to shift for themselves; really telling them not to adhere to his broken fortunes. The party was not very numerous. According to Lord Dudley, it dined 14 and voted 12. The more important of them were absorbed into the Administration, Huskisson becoming First Commissioner of Woods, or, as it was then called, Land Revenue, without a seat in the Cabinet, and Sturges Bourne taking a place at the Board of Control.

Political disappointment and impatience of his position in Parliament led Mr. Canning to commit what he afterwards spoke of as the greatest mistake of

his life—the acceptance of a special embassy to Lisbon. The ill-health of his eldest son had determined him to go thither in a private character. The Prince Regent was expected to visit Portugal from Brazil, and it occurred to the Ministry that the presence in Lisbon of Mr. Canning would enable them, if he were invested with the rank of ambassador, to give the welcome of England to the Prince through a statesman of European reputation invested with the highest diplomatic office. Doubtless they were inspired also by the desire to act with civility and courtesy to Mr. Canning. The Prince Regent, however, did not come to Portugal. Mr. Canning's conduct in taking the embassy was attacked on his return to England by Mr. Lambton and Sir Francis Burdett, especially on the ground of the additional pecuniary expense incurred in his appointment. Mr. Canning's reply was admitted by Mr. Lambton to be satisfactory, but he had placed himself in a somewhat equivocal and derogatory position. He had the faculty of putting himself in equivocal positions. While he was playing at public business in a second-rate capital of Europe, Castlereagh was directing the foreign affairs of the country with a success which was mainly due, no doubt, to Wellington's military genius, but which made him politically the foremost man in England and before Europe.

Canning resigned his Lisbon Embassy as soon as he learned that the Prince Regent was not coming thither; but he remained in Lisbon six months longer, bringing up his voluntary exile to seventeen months. During these seventeen months much had happened. Napoleon had escaped from Elba, Waterloo had been

fought, the Congress of Vienna, in which Castlereagh had represented England, had settled Europe after its own fashion. It must have been bitter to Canning to reflect that, but for his own imprudence, he would probably have been the Minister who would have played the chief part in these great transactions. With his personal regret the conviction, no doubt, mingled that, if he had not forfeited his rank in the councils of the nation, a more just, generous, and durable arrangement might have been arrived at.

On his return to England Mr. Canning resumed his place in Parliament. He had offered to resign his seat for Liverpool on his taking the Lisbon Embassy, but his constituents refused to allow their connection with him to be broken. According to the gossip of the time, Canning had intrigued for the invitation to Liverpool. He desired to increase his waning influence in the House of Commons by the weight attaching to the representation of a great commercial constituency. Sir Walter Scott had urged him some time before to take his own ground and to raise his own standard. At Liverpool he was unmuzzled. The confidence which this great mercantile constituency showed in him was echoed by the residents of Lisbon and the merchants of Bordeaux, by whom he was entertained at civic banquets. Mr. Canning was something more to them than an illustrious statesman; he was the representative of the commercial principles of Mr. Pitt, to which the return of peace gave a new opportunity.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN AND OUT OF OFFICE.

POWERFUL in the House of Commons, and popular in the country, the Liverpool Administration was ludicrously weak in debating power. The two members of the Cabinet in the Commons had grown to four. To Castlereagh and Vansittart, at the Foreign Office and at the Exchequer, had been added Bragge Bathurst (Brother Bragge) as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Wellesley Pole, as Master of the Mint. But they did not double the debating power of the Ministry. It was necessary to strengthen it. On Canning's return, in the spring of 1816, he was offered, at the instance of the Prince Regent, the Presidency of the Board of Control, in succession to the Earl of Buckinghamshire. The office was not then always a Cabinet one, though the affairs of our Indian Empire were submitted to it. Canning took it. He was humbled; he was regretting his Lisbon mistake, the sequel and crown of many other mistakes. 'In all probability,' he told Stapleton afterwards, 'I should have had the most influential post in the Government in the House of Commons if I had not fallen into that error.' But he had acted, he went on to say, under a sense of duty, and in similar circumstances would do

again as he had done then. It is difficult to see what could have put Castlereagh out of his place, or Canning into it, if Canning had remained in England. Castlereagh had the confidence, while Canning had only the admiration, qualified by distrust and fear, of the country. Castlereagh was, in fact, believed to be, in spite of his blundering speech, the abler man of action of the two.

Mr. Canning held the Presidency of the Board of Control during five years. His term of office was covered by that during which the Marquis of Hastings was Governor-General, and was marked by the practical subjugation of the Peninsula by English arms. The government, of course, was that of the East India Company. The Governor-General was its servant, and not that of the Crown. The duties of the Board of Control were those of supervision and not of initiative. They were described by Mr. Canning in a speech which he delivered in reply to a hostile motion of Mr. Creevy's in 1822. By his success in the Mahratta wars the Marquis of Hastings had revolutionised India, delivering it from anarchy and pillage to order and industry; and Mr. Canning had his part in the work. He had at first refused to consent to the policy of Hastings. He was not disposed, he said, to run the risk of a general war for the sake of putting down the Pindarees. But to put down the Pindarees, as he soon saw, was essential to general peace. In Indian politics Mr. Canning belonged neither to the forward party nor to the party of retreat. He looked, to use his own words, on the extension of our Indian Empire with awe, and expressed the hope that what remained of substantive

and independent power in that country might stand untouched and unimpaired. He forbade the censorship of the press in India. At home he was a member of a Government in which Sidmouth was Home Secretary, and in which Castlereagh was the presiding and animating spirit, and which, by its legislative and administrative and judicial tyrannies, recalled the worst days of Pitt. Canning's attitude during this period, or rather at the commencement of it—but the description applies to it throughout—is given in a letter which Lord Dudley wrote to the Bishop of Llandaff early in February 1817: 'Is there a dangerous spirit abroad, or is there not? Canning says there is. But an eloquent Minister is a bad authority on such a subject. An alarm is the harvest of such a personage.' Canning condescended to be a professional alarmist for his old enemy Sidmouth—to supply the rhetoric which should justify Sidmouth and Castlereagh's policy. The rebellion was a rebellion of the belly, and it was absurd to trace it back to those French principles which had formed the rhetorical stock-in-trade of Canning's youth, or to connect, as he did, the movement for parliamentary reform with ulterior purposes of revolution. The Corn Law of 1815, passed while Canning was in Lisbon, the bad harvest of 1816, the war prices of the following years, and the distress and famine which those war prices produced, account for the disaffection and disturbances which Canning attributed to the presence of a dangerous spirit. There can be little doubt that at the bottom of his heart Canning disapproved of the protective policy to which he was accessory after the fact. The soundness of his

economic doctrines had been proved in many discussions, and when he came into real power his action with respect to the Corn Laws shows what his judgment of them was. The Corn Laws produced distress, distress produced disaffection and tumult, disaffection and tumult were made the pretext for coercive measures which increased them, and for resistance to those political improvements which would have abated them. It is not necessary to tell the story of Luddism, of the Spencean Societies and Hampden Clubs, of the Blanketeers, of the Derby insurrection, of the Spafields riot, of Peterloo, and of the Cato Street conspiracy, and of the machinations of spies and informers such as Oliver, whose mission it was to manufacture the dangerous spirit which it was the business of Sidmouth to suppress. The Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; the Sidmouth Circular about seditious and blasphemous libels, and the arbitrary power with which it invested the magistrates, by assuming them to be invested with it; the Six Acts, and prosecutions such as that of Hone, over which Lord Ellenborough, no longer a member of the Cabinet, presided—this scandal at least was avoided—proved the little value of coercion as a remedy. It is only necessary summarily to recall these things in order to give an idea what the spirit of the Administration was of which Canning consented to be a member. No one, of course, will contend that disaffection and tumult, however originating, can be tolerated. To deal with the cause does not exempt you from striking at the effect. But the ordinary laws would probably have been enough for the purposes of repression, if sober reforms had been

instituted. Acquiescent in Sidmouth's manner of dealing with disorder and distress at home, he was submissive to Castlereagh's foreign policy, which, so far as it was possible on the part of an English Minister, was the policy of the Holy Alliance, of which Canning was the sworn enemy in heart now as in action afterwards..

Towards the close of the year 1820 Canning resigned the Presidency of the Board of Control and retired from the Cabinet. He had declined to be a party to the proceedings taken by Lord Liverpool's Government against the Princess of Wales, now Queen; and he felt that absence from the House or silence in it did not sufficiently relieve him from Ministerial responsibility. The death of George III. in 1820 had raised the question of her status as Queen. She was certain to come to England for the assertion of her conjugal rights. She had threatened to visit this country in August 1819, while she was yet only Princess of Wales, much to the annoyance of her adviser, Brougham, who believed that only mischief would come of it, 'not to mention the infernal personal annoyance of having such a devil to plague one for six months.' George IV., as he had now become, was eager for a Bill of divorce, and appealed to his Ministers to procure one. They represented to him that if the Queen and he were private persons he could not obtain a divorce in the Courts, and to introduce a Bill not resting upon a judicial decision would be a course attended with grave embarrassment. Canning joined in this Ministerial memorandum, which conceded the exclusion of the Queen's name from the Liturgy, but he did so by way of

compromise. In a docket on the back of the memorandum he declared that he could not have assented to this course if any penal process had been in contemplation. If the Queen was to be accused, it would be improper to divest her of privileges before trial. But why divest her of them even if unaccused and without trial? The only answer is that something had to be conceded to the King if the action he desired was not taken against the Queen. Ministers proposed that an annuity of 35,000*l.*, which the King might raise to 50,000*l.*, should be conferred on the Queen, conditionally on her consenting to reside abroad and relinquish the title of Queen. She answered the proposal by coming to London, where she took up her residence in the house of Alderman Wood. The gauntlet thus thrown down was promptly lifted. On the day of her arrival Lord Castlereagh brought into the House of Commons the thenceforward celebrated green bag, containing papers confirmatory of the accusations against the Queen. On Castlereagh's moving that they be referred to a Select Committee, Wilberforce tried to prevent the breaking of the seal of the bag. In the discussions which followed Canning spoke twice, contending that inquiry was due to the Queen, to whom he referred with regard and affection springing out of old relations, and could not be avoided after she had come to England and expressly demanded it. Though thus associating himself with his colleagues, Canning's first feeling was that he could not with personal honour remain among them. 'So help me, God,' he exclaimed in the House of Commons, 'I will never place myself in the position of an accuser towards this individual!'

He had an audience of the King, which he described to a friend in a memorandum, in which, giving scope to his insatiable delight in mock-mysteries, he spoke of the King as Mars, of the Queen as Dirce, and of himself as Marcus. Marcus represented to Mars that, owing to the relations of confidence in which he had formerly stood to Dirce, he could not be a consenting party to criminal proceedings being taken against her. On the other hand, Marcus felt the difficulty of continuing in the service of Mars without taking part in the discussions on this vital subject. Mars expressed his sense of Marcus's honourable conduct, but desired a few hours for consideration. Afterwards, through Lord Liverpool, the King requested Canning to remain in office on his own terms, and for the time no action was taken. The reference to Marcus's previous relations with Dirce require a few words of retrospective explanation. When the Princess of Wales lived at Montagu House, Blackheath, immediately after her separation from the Prince, Canning, then a very young man, resided near her. He frequently visited her and took part in the rather boisterous amusements of that unceremonious court, playing at blindman's-buff and other romping games, in which Sir William Scott, then a great advocate, and afterwards, as Lord Stowell, a greater magistrate, took part. In 1803, Canning had offered to take any steps in Parliament which she might direct to obtain an increase of her appointments, though he advised her to depend rather on the kind feeling of the King (George III.), who was disposed to be her good friend and to protect her against her husband's persecutions. In 1814 he advised her to take up her

residence abroad, among her friends at Brunswick, or, if she preferred it, elsewhere; she would be 'the grace, life and heart' of any society which she might join. Canning finally acquiesced in the suggestion that he should remain in office while holding aloof from the proceedings of which the Queen was the subject. On July 5, 1820, he wrote to Lord Liverpool, protesting, as a breach of the understanding on which he had consented to the exclusion of the Queen's name from the Liturgy, against the introduction of a clause of divorce into the Bill of Pains and Penalties. Towards the close of this month Lord Liverpool offered to Canning the Secretaryship of State for the Home Department, which Canning declined on the ground that the office would make him an active participant in the proceedings against the Queen. As Home Secretary all questions of police which might arise out of the agitation on behalf of the Queen, threatening often to degenerate into tumult, would be referred to him; he would have to consider the expediency of prosecutions for libel; in fact he would be immersed in the details of the matter, as to which he would be brought into direct and constant communication with the King. To get clear of the thing, and especially to avoid the trial, which began on August 17, 1820, Canning left England early in that month. He expressed his view of the business in a letter to Huskisson, written from Paris on October 2. There had been some talk of dropping the divorce clause from the Bill. As a parallel case, Canning mentions that in his speech in 1809, defending the Duke of York from the charge of corruption in the distribution of army patronage, he had contended that crime must be proved

before penalties were inflicted. But for 'the fatal measure of the Liturgy,' to which, however, he was a conditionally though reluctantly assenting party, he could, he said, have settled the matter last summer. Ministers ought to have been firmer with the King; the King would then have played fair. 'But there were conferences as well as minutes, and I suspect the unwritten counteracted the written communications.' However, as the trial had begun, it must be pushed on to conviction or acquittal, and in the event of the Queen's being acquitted, her name must be restored to the Liturgy. There was neither acquittal nor conviction. The second reading of the Bill was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of nine only; it was certain of defeat in future stages; and, in the almost impossible event of its reaching the House of Commons, of rejection there by an overwhelming majority. Liverpool announced that the measure would be dropped. Canning thought his colleagues had got out of the scrape better than they deserved. Canning had remained a member of the Government which was responsible for the Bill of Pains and Penalties, possibly with the idea that, if the issue were a direct acquittal, he might be of service to the Queen in considering the arrangements which would become necessary. He returned to England now that the matter was over, and resolved upon resigning office. In a letter to the King, written from the India Board on December 12, 1820, he points out that the House of Commons will unavoidably be engaged in discussions with respect to the Queen's case, and that those discussions must be so mixed up with the general business of the session that it would be

impossible for a Minister to absent himself from them, or to avoid taking part in them. Writing himself from Carlton House the next day, the King with promptitude, but with gracious expressions of regret, accepted Canning's resignation. Sidmouth and Castlereagh were warm and generous in their declarations of regard and sorrow; Sidmouth addressing him as 'My dear Sir,' Castlereagh as 'My dear Canning.' Sidmouth says: 'The loss to the King's service and to your colleagues will be irreparable; and let me add that I shall feel it deeply, for your kind, cordial and honourable conduct has left a deep impression on my mind.' Castlereagh describes himself as 'the individual member of the Government who must feel your loss the most seriously, both in the House of Commons and in the Foreign Office.' 'Allow me,' he adds, 'at the same time most cordially to thank you for the uniform attention with which you have followed up, and the kindness with which you have assisted me in, the department for the conduct of which I am more immediately responsible.' The Court of Directors of the East India Company, on being apprised of his retirement, sent him a letter of thanks and regret (December 20, 1820). Canning, replying in a letter written on Christmas Day from Tuddenham, Norfolk, refers with satisfaction to the fact that he had departed from precedent in conferring the Governments of Bombay and Madras on distinguished servants of the Company, Mr. Elphinstone and General Munro. He claims credit for not interfering with the Company's nominations, still less urging personal wishes or soliciting personal favours in regard to their exercise of patronage. Can-

ning was succeeded in the Presidency of the Board of Control by Mr. Bathurst Bragge (Brother Bragge), who seemed to haunt him vengefully through his career. At a meeting specially summoned in the following March, the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock passed a formal and unanimous vote of thanks to Canning.

Canning remained out of office during the whole of the year 1821 and the greater part of 1822. In the beginning of the former year Lord Sidmouth resigned the Home Secretaryship, retaining a seat in the Cabinet without office. Mr. Peel, who was supposed to represent the principles of Sidmouth, and did so, so far as opposition to the Catholic claims was concerned, became his successor. Sidmouth thought he could now withdraw without endangering public tranquillity. He had coerced England into quietude. 'It was because my official bed had become a bed of roses that I determined to retire from it. When strewn with thorns I would not have left it.' Lord Liverpool was anxious to regain Canning's aid. 'In June last' (1821), Canning wrote to Lord Morley, 'there was a contest between Liverpool and the King for and against my readmission to the Cabinet. I then begged not to be pressed on the King, as you know. I was so far taken at my word that the pressure was dropped for the time, to be renewed on the King's return from Ireland. On his Majesty's return from Ireland he expressly forbade Liverpool to reopen the subject, and it was adjourned till the return from Hanover.' The Marquis of Hastings had intimated, or was understood to have intimated, his wish to come back to Europe, and his desire that a

successor to him in the office of Governor-General of India should be named. The Chairman of the Court of Directors asked Canning to be allowed to propose him, and communications were entered into with Lord Liverpool and the King, who was ready enough to assent to an arrangement which would relieve him of the presence and claims to office in England of a statesman whose opposition to him in the matter of the Queen's trial he had not forgiven. To Canning also, who knew himself proscribed, whose fortune, or rather whose wife's fortune, had been diminished, and to whom Parliament without office had little charm, the offer was agreeable. The arrangement was suddenly checked by the announcement that Lord Hastings had been misunderstood. He had not intended to resign. The place, therefore, was not vacant. The Marquis of Hastings had sent a letter of resignation to his friend Colonel Doyle, but Colonel Doyle had not presented it. Ultimately, at the King's instance, it was sent in to the Court of Directors, but it was found to be invalid, being in contravention of a clause in the Charter Act of 1793. While the affair of India was uncertain a reconstruction of the Ministry had been going on, which, independently of the King's hostility to Canning, would have made it difficult to bring him in. Overtures were made to the Grenvilles. Lord Grenville himself had done with office, and was planting trees in Dropmore. But the claims of the Grenville family were recognised. The Marquis of Buckingham was made a duke; his kinsman, Mr. Charles Williams Wynn, entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Control; and two faithful dependents of the ducal clan found secondary

places. Canning was indignant at the preference given to Wynn over his friend Huskisson, though he advised Huskisson not to resent it.

The difficulty about the Governor-Generalship was at length overcome, and though Mrs. Canning was described as 'furious at India,' Canning accepted the post. He was at Seaforth, the residence of Mr. John Gladstone, near Liverpool, whither he had gone to bid farewell to his old constituents, when the news came that the Marquis of Londonderry—as Castlereagh was now styled, though the marquisate being an Irish one he continued to sit in the House of Commons—had committed suicide. The situation was again changed. Canning, writing on August 20 to the Earl of Morley, to discuss the effect which this event might have on his plans and prospects, declares that he wishes he was well on board the 'Jupiter'—the vessel which was to carry him out to India. No proposal, he says, can be made to him which will make him glad to stay; but such a proposal may be made as will make it impossible for him not to stay. If the whole inheritance (the Foreign Office with the leadership of the House of Commons) is offered to him, he does not see how he can refuse it; if, as one of his friends suggested, the Colonial Office is substituted for the Foreign Office, he will certainly decline it. The whole inheritance was placed promptly at Canning's disposal, Lord Liverpool insisting, and the King submitting, though with a bad grace, to the inevitable. Canning felt reluctance. His imagination had been taken with the idea of India, and he made a money sacrifice in remaining in England. If only the chance had offered ten years earlier! 'Ten years,' he wrote to

Sir Charles Bagot, 'have made a world of difference, and have made a very different sort of world to bustle in than that which I should have found in 1812. For fame, it is a squeezed orange, but for public good there is something to do, and I shall try—but it must be cautiously—to do it. You know my politics well enough to know what I mean when I say that for "Europe" I shall be desirous now and then to read "England."' Canning protested against 'the principle of European questions.' He was aware of the difficulties with which he had to contend. The superstition against which he set his face was even more powerful then than it is now. He had to reckon also with strong personal hostility, within the Cabinet and without. The King spoke of him as if he were a convict to whom he had granted a free pardon. He tolerated Canning as Minister on the ground that 'the brightest ornament of his Crown was the power of extending grace and favour to a subject who might have incurred his displeasure.' Canning insisted on an explanation of these words, and, learning that they referred to his attitude in relation to the prosecution of the Queen, was content to assert the rectitude of his motives. Foreign courts and foreign embassies were against Canning and his system of reading, instead of Europe, England, and by many of his colleagues he was more thwarted than aided.

CHAPTER XX.

MINISTERIAL LEADER AND FOREIGN SECRETARY.

FINDING the representation of Liverpool in addition to the toils of office and of Parliament beyond his strength, Canning, early in 1823, resigned his seat for that borough, and was elected for Harwich. After nearly thirty years of public life, he was at length the leader of the House of Commons. No contrast could be more strongly marked than that between himself and his immediate predecessor. The imposing figure and gallant bearing of Castlereagh, his unvarying courtesy, his knowledge of mankind and of public business, his chivalry and good sense won the affection and confidence of the House of Commons, in spite of an absolute incapacity of coherent speech. The images by which he strove to bring his ideas home to his own mind and to the minds of his hearers have become by-words. He is credited with the phrase 'ignorant impatience of taxation': he really spoke of 'the ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation.' Confounding Alcmena with her son, he told a member that he was mistaken if he thought his Herculean labours would bring forth a Hercules; he described a defeated adversary as 'standing prostrate.' He laboured, in fact, under a sort of parliamentary aphasia. The attempts which he made

to disguise a strong Irish accent set off his oratoric incapacity. 'Knowledge' he called 'nullige,' the House of Commons was the House of 'Cummins,' a 'discussion' was a 'deskisson.' For ten years the House of Commons had been led by a chief whose courage in trying to talk English was greater than that which the Duke of Wellington showed in talking French, who was absolutely without the power of expression. For five years to come it was to be led by probably the greatest master of the art of expression that any English Parliament has ever seen. Canning's speech was as the closely fitting and yet elastic vesture of his thought, at once dress and adornment. Eye and lip, glance and tone, alert movement and well-balanced attitude, prefigured and accompanied the articulate utterance of his meaning. In some respects this absolute rhetorical sufficiency was an injury to Canning. Because Castlereagh said so little, and said it so ill, he was supposed to have a great deal in his mind which he left unsaid; because Canning expressed so perfectly all that it was his business to say, it was supposed that there was nothing behind which he left unexpressed. The sample was believed to be the whole store. The House of Commons which Canning faced in 1823 was, of course, in its personal constitution a very different assembly from that which he had entered in 1794. Pitt and Fox and Windham had joined a larger majority than any with which they had divided in the lobby. Addington had transferred his somewhat fretful and uneasy virtue to the Upper House, whither, too, Grey had carried his patrician eloquence; and a later comer, Lord Henry Petty, as Marquis of Lansdowne, his urbane and moderating

wisdom. In their place the Whig aristocracy had found reinforcement as worthy in the homely good sense of Lord Althorp and the pointed sentences of Lord John Russell. In the place of Whitbread, Brougham was 'mashing and pounding,' to use Canning's phrase, as with the flail of Talus. The adroit parliamentary faculty of Peel, the easy and engaging speech of Robinson, the manly and rational eloquence of Plunket, gave Canning an aid in debate which he generously acknowledged. Grattan and Romilly and Francis Horner had come and gone. Tierney on the one side of the House and Huskisson on the other survived to remind Canning of the comrades and rivals whom he had met on entering Parliament. The Administration had two periods, which may be described as the Castlereagh period, lasting from 1812 to 1822, and the Canning period, from 1822 to 1827. These two statesmen were really its successive chiefs, Lord Liverpool discharging no other function of the premiership than the important one of holding the Cabinet together. He was the cement which kept the incongruous materials from falling apart. Transitions and differences are never so sudden and sharp in fact as they are in description, and the Castlereagh administration of the Foreign Office eased the passage from the policy forced upon Pitt to that eagerly adopted by Canning. They both claimed to be Pittites—'the followers of Mr. Pitt' was the name of which they were proudest—but while Canning represented his inner mind, Castlereagh continued, so far as he could, his external policy. The reaction in England against alliance with the despotic powers of the Continent, which followed the conclusion of the Treaty of

Vienna, forced a certain measure of Liberalism on the reluctant mind of Castlereagh, and gave new energy to the large conceptions of Canning.

Canning had joined the Cabinet which concluded the Treaty of Vienna, but he did not conceal his disapprobation of its general spirit and of many of its provisions. The rounding off of kingdoms and states by the exchange and barter of territory and the people on it, as country gentlemen might 'swop' farms and tenants to bring their estates into a ring-fence, was distasteful to him. He especially censured the arrangements which gave Norway to Denmark and the duchy of Genoa to Sardinia, and restored the Pope and the petty Italian dukes. When Castlereagh, he said, got among princes and sovereigns at Vienna he thought he could not be too fine and complaisant. It was, however, the fault of Canning's hasty ambition, his exaggerated personal pretensions, and his too quick resentments, that he lost the chance of remaining continuously at the head of foreign affairs during the whole course of the Perceval and Liverpool Administrations. Otherwise a generous foreign policy might have began fifteen years earlier than it did. As the domestic difficulties and disturbances of England were the shadow of her foreign troubles, it is possible that in this case the administrative and legislative oppressions of Sidmouth and the judicial tyrannies of Ellenborough would have been avoided or mitigated. During this period, however, when he was not repining on the back benches or fretting beneath the clock, he was absorbed in the Mahratta wars of Hastings. The loss, probably, had its compensating gain. Canning, Foreign Minister

from 1807 or 1812 to 1822, might have been narrowed by the conditions under which, and the instruments with which, he had to work. The policy would, possibly, have been in some degree better, but the Minister might have been in an equal degree deteriorated. It was an advantage, both to England and to Europe, that in 1822 he came but slightly pledged to the old system, and free to form his own judgment and take his own course.

The year 1821, which witnessed the death of Napoleon, gave renewed vigour to the Holy Alliance. The chief of the military dictatorship and democratic despotism which had mastered Europe disappeared, and the old despotisms of divine right acted on their compact of oppression. The sovereigns of Austria, Russia, and Prussia met at Laybach, by adjournment from Troppau, and revived the pretensions out of which the revolutionary war of France against the leagued monarchs of Europe had sprung. The manifesto of the Holy Alliance, in 1815, embodied the pretensions set forth nearly a quarter of a century before in the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation of 1792, and reasserted in the circular which the allied sovereigns issued from Laybach in 1821 to their representatives at the various foreign courts. In this document they declared that 'useful and necessary changes in legislation and in the administration of states could only emanate from the free will, and from the intelligent and well-weighed convictions, of those whom God has made responsible for power. Penetrated with this eternal truth, the sovereigns have not hesitated to proclaim it with frankness and vigour. They have declared that, in respecting the rights and independence of legitimate

power, they regarded as legally null, and disavowed by the principles which constituted the public right of Europe, all pretended reforms operated by revolt and open hostilities.' These principles, stated nakedly and without shame, were too much even for Lord Castlereagh. In a despatch, written early in the year 1821, while admitting the right of a state to interfere in the internal affairs of another state when its own interests were endangered, he protested against the pretension to put down revolutionary movements apart from their immediate bearing on the security of the state so intervening, and denied that merely possible revolutionary movements can properly be made the basis of a hostile alliance. The principles of the Holy Alliance were not intended to remain a dead letter; they were promptly acted upon. Popular movements were suppressed in Naples and Piedmont; and intervention in Spain, where the Cortes had been summoned and the despotic rule of Ferdinand VII. had been overthrown, was in contemplation. Greece imitated the example set in the western peninsulas of Europe. The Congress of Verona was summoned, and Lord Castlereagh (now the Marquis of Londonderry) was preparing to join it, when in an access of despondency, the origin of which is variously explained, he took his own life. In the interval between this terrible event and his own appointment to the Foreign Office, in September 1822, Canning found occasion emphatically but indirectly to contradict the doctrines of the Laybach circular. Referring to the struggles going on in some Continental countries between the principles of monarchy and democracy, he exclaimed, 'In that struggle,

God be thanked, we have not any part to take.' On taking possession of the Foreign Office he found that the instructions which Lord Londonderry, as Secretary of State, had drawn up for Lord Londonderry as plenipotentiary were such as he could adopt. Believing, perhaps, that the 'three gentlemen of Verona,' as Brougham called the sovereigns of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, would find a colleague more to their mind in the Duke of Wellington than in himself, Canning sent him to represent England in the Congress, and transferred to him the instructions drawn up by Londonderry. He had many difficulties with the Duke, whose ideas of foreign policy were much narrower than Canning's, but whose authority as the spokesman of England was too great to be neglected. Londonderry's instructions, interpreted by Londonderry and acted on by him, would probably have proved in practice very different from Londonderry's instructions interpreted by Canning, even though it was the Duke of Wellington who had to act on them.

The main topics of the Congress were four: (1) the position of Greece, and the relations to Greece and to each other of Russia and Turkey; (2) the suppression of the slave trade; (3) the question of South American independence; and (4) the revolution in Spain.

When a boy at Eton, Canning had written and published in the 'Microcosm' a poem on 'The Slavery of Greece,' which anticipated the Byronic fervour of a later day. It is not necessary to see in his mature statesmanship a growth from this small seed. It is impossible to argue from the boy to the man. Perceval, when a law student in London, had spoken in the

debating societies of the day in favour of the cession of Gibraltar to Spain, and of the disestablishment of the Church of England. Canning's sympathies were with Greece, but he concurred in the refusal of the Congress to grant her recognition and protection. The maintenance of his doctrine of the non-interference of foreign nations in the internal affairs of other states was vital. If England interfered on the side of freedom, on what pretext could she deny the right of other states to interfere in behalf of despotism, or, as they would put it, order? The suppression of the slave trade was a measure in which Canning had always shown a sincere interest from the time of his youthful conversations with his West Indian friend Newton at Christ Church, though he had early in his parliamentary career made a speech, in which he said that if he were a negro he should prefer slavery in the West Indies to having his throat cut in Africa—as if that were the alternative. He failed to get more than an abstract adhesion to his views in the Congress. The slave trade was carried on by Brazil and Portugal largely under the French flag. But his Most Christian Majesty's representative was not disposed to take steps for its suppression. Canning was not more fortunate at Verona than he was four years later at Paris, when he urged upon the Bishop of Hermopolis (Minister of Worship) the desirability of obtaining a Papal Bull against the slave trade. 'When, after describing its anti-Christian character and all its horrors in practice (most eloquently, as I flattered myself), I ended by saying, "And it is now with Catholic countries only that the shame and criminality of this monstrous traffic

rests," my convert (as I hoped to find him) answered with the greatest mildness and simplicity, "Apparemment ils en ont plus de besoin."' On the subject of South American independence, the Congress refused to allow the rights of Spain to her colonies to be brought into question, and the Duke of Wellington presented a note, in which he recorded the fact that England had recognised the *de facto* independence of the Spanish colonies, and had entered into treaties with them.

As regards Spain herself, France succeeded in obtaining the consent of the other Powers (England excepted) to her intervention, in such time and manner as might seem good to her, for the restoration of order and of what was called legitimate government in that country. Mr. Canning was forced to be content with limiting the intervention to France, and with depriving it of the sanction of a European mandate. He thus reduced it to the level of a war between the two countries, iniquitous on the part of the aggressor, but still not sheltered by the doctrine of the general right of any Holy Alliance or European concert to interpose in the internal affairs of other nations. Mr. Canning protested only against the action of Erance. In his 'Politique de la Restauration,' M. Marcellus, who was at that time Secretary to the French Embassy in London, says that Canning was himself in favour of giving active assistance to Spain, but that a decision of the Cabinet in an opposite sense was carried against him by his young rival, Mr. Peel. But there is a good deal of imagination in M. Marcellus's recollections, personal and political.

In the speech from the throne in January 1823,

Louis XVIII. announced to the Chambers the invasion of Spain for the purpose of restoring the Crown to the descendant of Henri IV.; but hostilities, he said, would cease as soon as Ferdinand VII. should be free to give to his people the institutions which they could not hold except from him. Writing to our ambassador in Paris, Mr. Canning remonstrated against this doctrine as one which no British statesman could hold, and which, indeed, struck at the root of the British Constitution. The Spanish nation could not, he urged, be expected to submit to the doctrine that their free institutions depended upon the will of the King, first restored to his absolute power, and then voluntarily stripping himself of a portion of it.

Mr. Canning's position with regard to Spain was peculiar. Her friend in Europe, he was her enemy in America. But the principle which actuated him in both cases was the same. The right of Spain to determine her own course could not consistently be denied to the Spanish colonies, of which the mother country had practically lost control. Challenged as to the resemblance between the French invasion of Spain and the English war with revolutionary France, he denied that there was any parallelism. England had made war upon France, not because France had changed her internal institutions, but because she had broken treaties and attacked the independence of other nations. 'What country,' he asked, 'had Spain attempted to seize or revolutionise?' On Russia offering to France to protect her advance in Spain, by moving troops from the Vistula to the Rhine, Canning announced that, though neutral as between France and Spain, England

would see in the interference of other Powers reason for making the cause of Spain her own. Russia abstained from the proposed action. The admission of the jurisdiction of the Holy Alliance over Europe was a course which he deemed it vital at almost any cost to prevent. 'The time for Areopagus and the like of that,' as he put it, 'has gone by.' 'What should we have thought of interference from foreign Europe when King John granted Magna Charta, or of an interposition in the quarrel between Charles I. and his Parliament?'

The French intervention succeeded. Though England would have had, if she deemed her interests sufficiently involved, the right to interfere, the right was not an obligation. The necessity did not exist. The influence of France in Spain was not dangerous to England. That influence extending across the Atlantic might have been so. Mr. Canning, therefore, to use his own historic phrase, made up his mind that if France had Spain, it should not be the Spain of which our ancestors had been in awe, it should not be Spain with the Indies. He 'called the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old.' British consuls were despatched to the chief ports of the Spanish-American colonies. Buenos Ayres was recognised as an independent power. This first step in a new policy shook the Cabinet and detached Lord Sidmouth from it. Lord Westmoreland was also troublesome; a more important opposition was that of the Duke of Wellington, whom Canning charged with secret communications with the King and laying traps and mines for him. The Duke afterwards boasted that he had delayed the recognition of the South American

Republic for three years. The King was alarmed at Canning's determination for 'Europe' to read 'England,' at his denunciation of 'Areopagus and the like of that,' at his refusal to admit the jurisdiction of a league of despotic states, calling themselves 'Europe,' over independent nations. In a paper which Canning circulated among his colleagues he illustrated the application which might be made of this doctrine by quoting a passage from 'L'Etoile,' the organ of the ultra-Royalist party in France. It began thus: 'La position de l'Irlande intéresse toute l'Europe.' It went on to argue that Catholic Emancipation was necessary to the tranquillity of Great Britain, and that the tranquillity of Great Britain was necessary to the repose of France. Mr. Canning pointed out to his colleagues that the language used with respect to Ireland was 'identical with that employed by France to justify the invasion, the conquest, and now the retention of Spain. Naples, Piedmont, Spain, Ireland—who shall draw the line, if the principle of European questions be once admitted?'

The recognition of the independence of Mexico and of Colombia followed that of Buenos Ayres. Though the King assented to these measures, he did so with an uneasy mind. The Duke of Wellington was not the only person who laid 'plots and mines' for Canning. In a letter, dated January 28, 1825, to the Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Charles Wynn (then a Cabinet Minister) says that foreign influence has been at work with a view of breaking up the Government, but that the unanimity of Ministers is such that the 'chief mover of the discord' must fail. The foreign influence was apparently that of Prince Esterhazy, who was an

intimate of the King's, and one of the coterie of the royal cottage at Windsor, as well as Austrian Ambassador. The mover of discord was probably the King himself. He drew up a minute for submission to the Cabinet, complaining that their action in regard to the Spanish-American colonies was precisely analogous to that of France in aiding the revolt of the British-American colonies. The Government, he said, were deserting the principles of Mr. Pitt in concert with the Opposition, who were animated by their love of democracy as opposed to a monarchical aristocracy. 'The Jacobins of the world,' said the King, 'calling themselves Liberals,' were anxious to disturb the understanding on which the quadruple alliance was based. 'The King desires therefore distinctly to know from his Cabinet individually (*seriatim*) whether the great principles of policy established by his Government in the years 1814, 1815, and 1818 are or are not to be abandoned.'

The Cabinet saw in this demand for separate replies from each member of it an attempt on the part of the King to invade the principle of collective Ministerial responsibility, and returned a joint answer. They pointed out that as early as 1815 the dissent of his Majesty's Government from the views of the Allies as to their engagements for the maintenance of the peace of Europe had been recorded; that in 1818, at the conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, that divergence had been still more emphatically marked; and that later a circular of Lord Londonderry's had further dwelt on this divergence. In the sense involved in these qualifications, and in no other, they adhered to the principles of policy laid down in 1814, 1815, and 1818. The King accepted

this explanation subject to the condition that 'the system of confidence and reciprocal communication with his allies be fully and faithfully carried out.' Canning took fire at the words 'fully and faithfully,' regarding them as an imputation upon his honour as the Minister charged with the administration of foreign affairs. If his Majesty suspected his good faith he must ask to be relieved of his office. As to fulness of communication, that is a matter of discrimination, involving respect for the secrets of other Powers. Under a system of responsible government such as exists in England, such communications almost inevitably become public, and give rise to parliamentary discussions, and a reserve is therefore necessary of which the Government only can be the judge, and which no foreign Power can appreciate.

Canning's reference here was to the intrigues which he believed that Metternich, 'the greatest r—— and the greatest l —— on the Continent, perhaps in the civilised world, has been for a twelvemonth carrying on with the Court through Madame de —— (Lieven?), to change the policy of the Government by changing me—"*pour faire sauter M. C*——," as they frankly put it.' The King lived in the Cottage at Windsor in the society of the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors (Prince Esterhazy and Count Lieven), and Sir William Knighton, the King's privy purse, was an active member of the coterie. Canning let it be known that, if these intrigues were persisted in, he would take means of putting the House of Commons and the public in possession of the secret. Private communication by Foreign Ministers with the King of England was, he

declared, wholly at variance with the spirit and practice of the British Constitution. The practice had been allowed for the first time by his predecessor (Castlereagh), but it would not stand the test of parliamentary discussion. It was, strictly speaking, his duty to be present at every interview between the King and a foreign representative, and though he would not insist on this, he would take effectual means for putting a stop to Metternich's manœuvres.

These suspicions and intentions were made known to Lord Granville, then English Ambassador at Paris, with the certainty that they would reach Metternich and the King, which they did. Knighton was sent on a message of apology and reconciliation to Canning, who was then confined to his bed by illness. Knighton, formerly a physician, probably carried the talent of society and the arts of personal management to a greater perfection than anyone has done in England since his time. There are lion-tamers and serpent-charmers who can reduce to harmlessness creatures whom others cannot approach. Knighton was a king-tamer and charmer, and could bring George IV. to reason when no one else could. The gossipings of the Cottage, Knighton said, were of no importance. They seldom touched on serious politics, though, no doubt, Esterhazy and Lieven might instil some thoughts into the King's mind. But the King had no power of making society for himself, and he liked their society better than any other. The King was indisposed to business, and when Knighton urged it on him there were often very painful scenes. 'He is uncertain,' said Knighton; 'the creature of impulse. When he has got a notion into his head there

is no eradicating it; and I have known him, when agitated and perfectly fasting, talk himself into as complete a state of intoxication as if he had been dining and drinking largely.' But he was now absolutely content with Canning. Knighton had never known him so comfortable and happy, reconciled even to the Spanish-American recognition. Canning, from whose narrative to Stapleton these details are taken, said that 'it was his object to make the King comfortable and happy by placing him at the head of Europe, instead of being reckoned fifth in a great confederacy.' But the King, he said, owed the satisfactory position in which he found himself not to Canning and to Liverpool only, but to the extraordinary efficiency with which Peel, Robinson, and Huskisson filled the great offices of state with which they were charged. Of Peel in particular he spoke as the best Home Secretary this country had ever had, and the most able and honest Minister. The change in Esterhazy was not less. When, towards the close of the year, he bade farewell to the King upon his departure to take up the Austrian Embassy at Paris, Canning was present, and the royal and diplomatic intriguers vied in repentant eulogies upon his success as Foreign Minister. The King was especially pleased with the proposal of Bolivar to make him arbitrator in a dispute between Brazil and Colombia. He took it as a sign of his weight in the councils of South America. 'When we see our way,' he said, 'and can employ our influence, we can do anything.' 'Qui est-ce' (turning to Esterhazy) 'qui pourrait faire ce que nous venons d'accomplir au Brésil?'

Next to the rescue of the South American States, Canning desired to relieve Greece from Turkish domi-

nation, and to prepare the way for the recognition of her independence, of which, however, his premature death prevented his seeing the accomplishment. He died some months before Navarino. A conference was held at St. Petersburg in 1825, in which Canning declined to allow England to take a part, thinking that the despotic Powers, who might otherwise quarrel among themselves, would be united in common antagonism to the liberal policy of England. The Porte refused the offer of mediation, and France, Austria, and Prussia declined to join in measures of coercion. What the Emperor of Russia desired was that he should be authorised by the Holy Alliance to intervene in the Greek insurrection as France had intervened in Spain, in the hope that he would thus find his way to Constantinople. But he did not venture to act alone. '"Silly Mr. Tomkins," as I heard one of the Lyttelton girls singing the other night,' writes Canning; 'silly, if he accepts the rebuff of the Porte, sillier if he allows Austria's threats to prevent his making war. Yet the risk was too great with Austria and France protesting, and England looking on. My reflections come back, therefore, like Miss Lyttelton's song, to "silly Mr. Tomkins." Metternich has, therefore, to thank his own finesse if he, and not I, is the cruel Polly Hopkins who steps in between Mr. T. and his desires.'

Before the year was at an end 'silly Mr. Tomkins' had been succeeded on the throne by his brother Nicholas. In the divergence between Russia and the other Powers Canning thought he saw a chance of coming to an understanding with the new Czar. He hoped, as he put it, to be able to save Greece through the agency of the

Russian name upon the fears of Turkey. He proposed to the King to send the Duke of Wellington to St. Petersburg, as the fittest man to deprecate war. The ostensible object of the mission was to convey the King's congratulations to the new Emperor on his accession. The King thought the Duke would object on the ground of his health; but, says Canning, he 'jumped, as I foresaw that he would, at the proposal.' 'Never better in my life; ready to set out in a week.' The Duke was always sensitive to the imputation of illness, and to the day of his death was never better in his life. There were difficulties, however, in the way of an understanding with Russia. To the Emperor Nicholas, at this time, the Greeks were rather rebels to be put down than co-religionists to be relieved from Mohammedan domination. The personal relations between Canning and the Duke of Wellington had never been satisfactory. There were reciprocal complaints of want of direct and prompt communication. The negotiations dragged on, but in the end a protocol between England and Russia was signed, to which the adhesion of the other Powers was solicited, and by which it was arranged that Greece should be converted into what is now called an autonomous vassal state, paying tribute to the Turkish Empire, but governed by native authorities, and enjoying freedom of commerce and conscience. In 1827 the protocol was converted into the treaty to which France became a party. Mr. Canning's last act, though he was then Prime Minister and not Foreign Minister, Lord Dudley and Ward having succeeded him in the latter office, was to take part in the joint declaration of the three Powers calling upon the Porte to enter into an armistice

with Greece with a view to negotiations for a peace, and threatening to impose the armistice by force if it were not voluntarily adopted. The Greeks accepted the armistice, Turkey refused it. The battle of Navarino followed. It was fought in October, 1827. Canning had died in the August before. Three years after his death the complete independence of Greece was recognised in the Treaty of London.

By old treaties frequently renewed, a defensive and offensive alliance existed between England and Portugal. In 1826 it fell to Mr. Canning to give effect to it. In that year Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil and King of Portugal, renounced his European kingdom for his American empire. He granted a constitution to Portugal, and abdicated in favour of his infant daughter, Donna Maria da Gloria, the regency being conferred upon her aunt, the Infanta Isabella. Dom Miguel, the younger brother of Dom Pedro, claimed the throne, and, instigated by France, began civil war in Portugal. The Portuguese regiments in his interest deserted into Spain. Instead of being disarmed and interned they were equipped there, and from Spanish territory allowed to organise an invasion of and war in Portugal. The Princess Regent claimed, under the treaties, the aid of England against this aggression. Mr. Canning considered that the *casus fœderis* had arisen. On December 11, 1826, a royal message was brought down to Parliament announcing the King's compliance with this demand. Complaint was made that action had been delayed. 'But how,' said Canning, 'stands the fact? On Sunday, December 3, the Portuguese ambassador made a formal demand of assistance

against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was that, though we had heard rumours to that effect, we had not yet received such precise information as justified us in applying to Parliament. It was only on Friday that that information arrived. On Saturday his Majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday that decision received the sanction of his Majesty. On Monday it was communicated to the Houses of Parliament; and to-day, at the hour at which I have the honour of addressing you, the troops of Great Britain are on their march for embarkment.' Recalling to the recollection of the House the prediction which he had made some years ago, that the next war in Europe would be a war of opinions, Canning added that England did not go to Portugal to take part in a war of opinions. 'We go to Portugal not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions, but to defend and preserve the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well-known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted foreign dominion shall not come.' On Christmas Day, in 1826, the British forces landed in Lisbon. Hostilities at once ceased. In eighteen months the troops returned to England without having fired a shot.

Next to the King and the Continental gossips of the Cottage, Canning found the main obstacle to his foreign policy in the Duke of Wellington. He visited Paris in the autumn of 1826 and dined with Charles X. The Duke of Wellington, he said, was very angry at his going there, and two years ago had interfered with the King to prevent his doing so. 'But I suppose,' he wrote to Liverpool, October 16, 'he felt that, after he

himself had been here in the interval, and after Westmoreland had been preaching here his ultra-philo Turkish principles, I was not likely to be again turned from my purpose.' On the Portuguese business, he complains of the Duke of Wellington's partiality for Spain and his hatred of Liberal institutions, which appear to have led him to incline to Dom Miguel's side. He speaks of unreasonable remonstrances on the Duke's part about the delay of despatches, and adds :—

But there is no use discussing these bye questions. There is something else—though I protest I know not what—at the bottom of the D. of W.'s present temper. His extraordinary fretfulness upon this matter, his repeated references and those of his *alentours* to the approach of critical times, and other language which I know that both he and the Chancellor have held very lately about the state of the Government, satisfy me that there is a looking forward to some convulsion in the Government; not wholly unmixed, perhaps, with some intention of bringing it on. Be it so; I confess I have no idea how the Government will be carried on in the House of Commons in the sense in which it has been carried on in the last three years, with the whole patronage of the law, the greater part of the Church, and all the army in the Chancellor's and the D. of W.'s hands.

CHAPTER XXI.

CANNING PRIME MINISTER.

THE convulsion in the Government was not brought on in the manner which Canning anticipated. Lord Liverpool had for some time been ailing, and in the beginning of the year 1827 was in Bath, promising himself, however, ten years of enjoyable life if he could get clear of office. Canning visited him there in January, he too carrying with him the seeds of the malady which was destined before the year was over to prove fatal to him. He came straight from the funeral of the Duke of York, which had taken place in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The night was bitterly cold, and Canning never recovered from the effects of the exposure. He found Lord Liverpool better, and no longer talking of resignation. The two men, comrades at Christ Church and rival orators of the Speaking Society, amused themselves and Stapleton, who accompanied Canning, by telling stories of their early years. From Bath, Canning went to Eartham, to see Huskisson. While he was there his cold became worse, and he spent one day in bed. He then went to Brighton, where he had taken a house, and where he was attacked by inflammation of the muscles and

brow ague—the former subdued by bleeding. He was too ill to write himself, and Stapleton sent daily bulletins of his health to Lord Liverpool. Lord Liverpool had sufficiently recovered to return to London. On February 16 he took part in the business of the House of Lords. On February 17 he was found lying senseless on the floor of his bedroom, with an open letter in his hand. It was from Stapleton, giving a somewhat unfavourable account of Canning's health. The next day Eldon recorded the following business-like reflection: 'His life is very uncertain, and it is quite certain that as an official man he is no more. Heaven knows who will be his successor.' Liverpool remained for five days unconscious. On his revival, the first word he uttered was Stapleton's name.

Peel wrote to Canning, informing him of what had happened, and came himself to Brighton. The two Ministers agreed that it would be improper to assume an unfavourable termination to Liverpool's illness, or to raise any question as to his successor. On February 22 Canning had sufficiently recovered to have an interview at the Royal Pavilion with the King, who concurred in holding the question of the Ministerial succession, which so puzzled Eldon, in abeyance. It soon became apparent, however, that Eldon was right, and that as an official man Lord Liverpool was no more.

Now began the intrigues against Canning. The Duke of Newcastle, availing himself of his right as a peer to have an audience of the King, declared that he would withdraw his support from the Government if Canning were named First Minister. On March 27 Canning was sent for to the Royal Lodge. The King

frankly stated his objections to the appointment of a 'Catholic (pro-Catholic) Prime Minister.' Canning advised the King to appoint a Government consisting exclusively of men holding the King's views on the Catholic question, and, in order to facilitate this arrangement, offered to resign office. To this the King strongly demurred. He approved of his foreign policy, which had placed England in a position such as she had never occupied before.

Canning, however, was firm. He could not, he said, admit in his own person the principle that the holding of pro-Catholic opinions was a proper ground of exclusion from the highest office in the State. 'He felt bound honestly to tell his Majesty in plain terms that the substantive power of a Prime Minister he must have, and, what is more, must be known to have, or he must beg leave to be allowed to retire from a situation which he could no longer fill with satisfaction to himself and benefit to his Majesty's service.' The King strove for some time to keep Canning, without consenting to Canning's terms. He had recourse to the expedient which he had adopted on the death of Perceval, and expressed, in a written minute entrusted to Canning, his desire that the Ministers would choose in succession to Lord Liverpool some peer holding Lord Liverpool's opinions, under whom they could consent to serve. Before the Cabinet could be called to consider this memorandum, Peel, at the instance of the King, suggested to Canning the inexpediency of its being submitted to them, and it was withheld. Matters dragged on. Canning for some days had no further communication with the King, but had many conversations with

Wellington and Peel. Canning proposed an arrangement identical, save for the fact that he sat in the House of Commons, with that to which Lord Salisbury gave effect in 1885. He suggested that Mr. Frederick Robinson should be raised to the peerage with the office of First Lord of the Treasury, Canning retaining the Foreign Office, but with the rank of Prime Minister. As Robinson, like Canning, was a pro-Catholic as well as a strong Canningite, and as Canning was still to be First Minister, this overture did not offer the basis of an accommodation with the anti-Catholics who were also anti-Canningites. Peel, whom Canning suspected of acting in concert with the Duke of Wellington in this matter, proposed that Canning should name the Duke. Canning refused. He could not serve under the Duke, who was not only an opponent of Catholic concessions, but was the antagonist, open or secret, of Canning's foreign policy. He also took the rather claptrap ground of hostility to a military Premier. The Duke of Wellington in politics was as much of a civilian as Canning or Peel. This was on April 9. Canning's refusal must have been at once communicated to the King, who now surrendered. On the next day, April 10, Canning received the royal command to prepare, with as little delay as possible, a plan for the reconstruction of the Administration.

The reconstruction of the Administration turned out practically to be the formation of a new one. The excitement of feeling was intense. 'The whole conversation,' wrote Lord Eldon, 'of this town is made up of abusive, bitterly abusive talk of people about each other—all fire and flame. I have known nothing like it.'

Six of Canning's colleagues in the Cabinet met his overtures by resignation. Peel's refusal was based on his personal position as regards Catholic Emancipation. For eleven years, he said, he had been a member of Lord Liverpool's Administration in offices which brought him in direct connection with Irish business. He had been six years Irish Secretary and five years Home Secretary. His personal opposition to the Catholic claims had been made more prominent by the fact that he was the only member of the Cabinet in the House of Commons who resisted them. But then he had the support of the Prime Minister, who was of his way of thinking. With Canning at the head of the Government his position would be seriously altered. Peel, it is curious now to note, feared that Roman Catholic emancipation might lead to the disestablishment of the Church and the repeal of the Union. But he did not believe in governing against Parliamentary and public opinion. In 1825, when Burdett carried a resolution in favour of emancipation, he thought emancipation could not be withheld. In 1827, when the majority was the other way, he believed it might still be refused, and he declined to join Canning. In 1829, he felt that the concession must be made. To him the art of government was the measurement of social forces, and the adaptation of policy to their direction and intensity. When it was clear to him that a thing must be done, and that his help was essential to the doing of it, his duty was plainly marked out. His casuistry may have been faulty, but there is no reason to doubt his purity and uprightness. Besides Peel, five other members of the Liverpool Cabinet retired—the Duke

of Wellington, Master-General of the Ordnance, Lord Chancellor Eldon, Lord Westmoreland (the Sot Privé), Lord Bathurst (War and Colonial Secretary), and Lord Bexley (formerly Vansittart), who had exchanged the Chancellorship of the Exchequer for a peerage and the Duchy of Lancaster. Bexley afterwards withdrew his resignation, but the balance was kept even by Lord Melville's—not, of course, Pitt's Dundas—retirement from the Admiralty. Canning regarded these desertions as fatal to his chance of forming an Administration, and waited upon the King to renounce the commission entrusted to him. The King, however, urged him to persevere; and, before leaving him, Canning kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury. On April 12 a new writ was moved for the borough of Newport—which had chosen him in the elections of 1826—vacated by his acceptance of office. The House adjourned until May 1. When it met again the new Ministry was completed. Mr. Canning united the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir John Copley, under the title of Lord Lyndhurst, succeeded Lord Eldon as Lord Chancellor; the Duke of Portland (whose place was afterwards taken by the Earl of Carlisle) became Lord Privy Seal, in succession to the 'glutinously adhesive' Westmoreland (now *dégommé*); Mr. Sturges Bourne became Home Secretary in the place of Peel, and was himself succeeded presently by the Marquis of Lansdowne, the 'little Petty' of Canning's early satire; Lord Dudley and Ward took Canning's old post of Foreign Secretary; Mr. Frederick Robinson, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the late Liverpool Administration, now raised to the peer-

age as Viscount Goderich, succeeded Lord Bathurst as War and Colonial Minister; and the Earl of Carlisle became First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, an office in which he was succeeded by Mr. Sturges Bourne when Lord Carlisle took the Privy Seal and Lord Lansdowne the Home Office. Canning prudently strengthened himself at Court by taking the Admiralty out of Commission, and appointing the Duke of Clarence Lord High Admiral. Overtures were made to the Duke of Wellington to retain, without a seat in the Cabinet, and therefore without giving in his political adhesion to the Government, the office of Commander-in-Chief, which he had held in conjunction with the Master-Generalship of the Ordnance. But he refused even this neutral support. In the earlier negotiations and correspondence he had accused Canning of failure in personal courtesy towards him. To him Canning was a 'charlatan.' Their secret antagonism now became pronounced alienation. They never saw each other after the Duke's resignation. The part taken by Wellington in all this business is by no means clear. Though disclaiming it strongly, he seems to have been attracted by the notion of being Prime Minister. He denied concert in Peel's suggestion, but not knowledge of it. But the King would not hear of Canning's leaving the Government, and Canning was resolved to have the first place in it, or to be out of it altogether.

The Ministry now formed was practically a Liberal one. In the Tory party, as it was reconstructed by the younger Pitt, there had always been an element of Liberalism derived by Pitt himself on the one hand

from the economic and philosophic Radicalism of Shelburne, under whom he entered official life, or rather from Adam Smith, the common teacher of both, and on the other from the bold and generous foreign policy of Chatham. In Canning the spirit of Chatham revived; Huskisson, his most intimate personal friend and official and parliamentary colleague, and Robinson more directly embodied the economic Liberalism of Shelburne. But Canning, though commercial and fiscal subjects were not so familiar to him as foreign questions, correctly apprehended them. This his celebrated speech on the Bullion Committee and his speeches on the Corn Laws sufficiently showed. Free Trade was then in the reciprocity stage, and this is the despatch in cypher with which Canning puzzled Sir Charles Bagot, then Minister at the Hague:—

> In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
> Is giving too little and asking too much;
> With equal advantage the French are content,
> So we'll clap on Dutch bottoms a twenty per cent.
> Twenty per cent.,
> Twenty per cent.,
> Nous frapperons Falck with twenty per cent.

Mr. Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, and Mr. Tierney, who afterwards became Master of the Mint in Canning's Ministry, and others took their seats behind the new Ministers on their reappearance in Parliament. In the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne, the son of Shelburne, and Lord Holland, the nephew of Charles James Fox, exhibited similar correctness of insight and largeness of view. There was one remarkable exception to the generous confidence which the Whigs,

as a rule, were disposed to place in Mr. Canning. Lord Grey showed himself incapable of even a magnanimous forbearance. Possibly he had derived from association with the Grenvilles the distrust and dislike with which the brotherhood were inspired towards Mr. Canning. His haughty and arrogant scorn and the vivacious and piercing contempt of Mr. Canning sharpened this animosity. Grey lost no time in making a bitter attack on the new Minister, whose foreign policy he assailed—that, however, defended itself in the changed aspect of Europe—and whom he charged with betraying the Roman Catholics and his own honour in giving an unconstitutional pledge to the King not to bring forward the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation. It seems probable, from passages in the Duke of Buckingham's 'Memoirs of the Court of George IV.,' that the King amused himself by telling lies on this subject, which Lord Grey believed. But apart from the letters of Canning and the King, which refute the royal story, the anti-Catholic secession of Peel, Wellington and the rest, and the whole history of the formation of Mr. Canning's Ministry contradict it. Canning was cut to the quick, and at one time thought of taking a peerage, in order that he might answer Lord Grey in person. He actually prepared the speech which he intended to deliver, and recited it to Mrs. Canning, who told Greville of the circumstance, adding that she thought Grey's attack had hastened her husband's death. The Ministry was weak in the Lords. Lord Goderich, who when he was in the House of Commons some competent if prejudiced and eccentric observers had counted the superior of Canning and

Peel, had not the courage to face Grey and Wellington. In Lord Dudley, the Amiel of politics, great capacity and some ambition were paralysed by a disabling critical fastidiousness. The silver voice and brazen front of Lyndhurst strengthened the debating power of the Ministry in the Lords without adding to its moral weight. In the House of Commons Canning was teased by the pertinacious hostility of the 'yelpers,' as they were called, who barked out coarse insinuations against him in question and taunt.

Canning's health was evidently shattered, his nerves worn, and his temper embittered. The prize for which he had striven so long, and which had so long eluded his grasp, which he had thought to be within his reach twenty years ago, but in the attempt to seize which he had been baffled and driven into isolation, and, so far as was possible to his shining qualities, into obscurity, was now his. But fame was a sucked orange. The great Foreign Minister had no opportunity of proving himself a great First Minister. Parliament rose early in July. It was hoped that a long recess would revive the flagging spirits and restore the waning strength of the Prime Minister. He had never recovered entirely from the cold which he had caught in January at the Duke of York's funeral. He increased it by sitting under a tree in the open air at Wimbledon (July 10), where he had dined with Lord Lyndhurst. Ten days later, in reply to a letter from the King, inquiring as to his recovery from 'the odious lumbago,' Canning says that he has 'happily left his bed for the first time to-day' (July 20), 'and is ordered to go to Chiswick, which the Duke of Devonshire has kindly lent him.

After a few days of quiet there he will, with your Majesty's kind permission, pay his respects to your Majesty.' Canning visited the King on July 31, and transacted business in Downing Street. The next day he returned to Chiswick, which he never left alive. 'Canning,' writes Croker to Lord Hertford, 'looks ill, but his intimates say he is only tired. The Duke of Devonshire has lent him Chiswick, as his father did to Mr. Fox. I hope it may not be an omen.' Canning occupied the room in which Fox had died—'a small low chamber, once a nursery, dark, and opening into a wing of the building, which gives it the appearance of an opening into a courtyard.' He told Croker that he had not had one day's health since the beginning of the year. 'He ate and drank too heartily,' says Croker, prosaically. But even this habit will not wholly account for the melancholy which, according to Croker himself, was stamped upon Canning's face at this time. Stapleton says he had suffered paroxysms of pain at Brighton earlier in the year. Formerly he had been able to throw aside everything that harassed him as soon as his head was on his pillow. Now his nights were wakeful. He was, almost literally, worn and stung to death. Sensitive to the paltriest newspaper paragraph, the attacks of Wellington and Grey and the barkings of the yelpers fretted him beyond endurance. Even at an earlier period, according to M. Marcellus, he had foreboded for himself the fate of Castlereagh. But the Canning of Marcellus is evidently a fancy sketch rather than an historic portrait—a Canning after the likeness of Canning's friend and rival in European politics, Chateaubriand.

CHAPTER XXII.

DEATH OF CANNING.

DURING the earlier days of his illness he made an effort to attend to business, but his mind every now and then wandered. Of this he was apparently conscious. He had written a paper on the affairs of Portugal, which, says Croker, he told Stapleton to take to Goderich and Robinson (Robinson was Goderich), and to desire them to cut it up and not to spare it. This he asked Stapleton to write down, that there might be no mistake. On Stapleton's reading out the words: 'Send this paper to Goderich and Robinson,' Canning said: 'Goderich and Dudley. Now you see how necessary it was to make you write it down; you would else have thought I was talking nonsense.' Next day he walked about the room and refused to be helped into bed. 'No, no,' he said, 'not so bad as that. I think I can do that without help.' He seemed encouraged by this achievement, and when he had got into bed he said gaily, 'Well, I feel that if I can get through to-day I shall do.' Later in the day this hopeful feeling gave way. He told Sir Matthew Tierney, whom Knighton had sent to him, distrusting the old navy surgeon whom Canning had chosen as his medical attendant, that 'he had struggled with the disease for

a long while, but that now he felt that it had quite mastered him.'

On August 4 it became evident that the worst was to be feared, and Stapleton, who was with him, was asked whether there was anything in his public or private affairs which might make it desirable to warn him of his danger. Receiving a negative answer, his physicians thought it advisable not to disturb him. The next day he asked his daughter to read prayers to him; 'but he began to wander, and it was not done.' Later on, being asked whether he felt better, he replied, 'Yes, a little; but if all the pain which I have suffered throughout my life were collected together it would not amount to the one-hundredth part of the pain I have suffered during the last three days.' He then wandered and dozed. 'When the physicians saw him this evening (Stapleton records) he was in pain, and exclaimed, "My God! my God!" Dr. Farre observed, "You do right, sir, to call upon your God. I hope you pray to Him." "I do, I do," was his answer. "And you ask," added the doctor, "for mercy and salvation through the merits of your Redeemer?" "Yes," he replied, "I do, through the merits of Jesus Christ." In the course of the evening he said to Sir William Knighton, whom the King had sent to see him, "This may be hard upon me, but it is harder upon the King."' On the 7th there was a rally, followed by a relapse. The next day the end came. Stapleton went into his bedroom early and found him unconscious. 'Sir M. Tierney felt his pulse, thought for a second that he was gone, but, he still breathed. In a few minutes there ceased to be any signs of breathing. He passed

away so quietly that the exact moment could not be ascertained, but it was between twelve and ten minutes before four.'

Even at this hour, before daybreak, a vast crowd of three or four thousand persons was assembled outside the Lodge at Chiswick, waiting for the tidings of life or death. More numerous still was the concourse which lined the streets as the statesman's body was borne in a funeral which, though intended to be private, was followed by princes and ambassadors and members of both Houses of Parliament, to Westminster Abbey, where a statue by Chantrey commemorates him, on the back of which the words, 'Thus Canning stood,' are inscribed. Another statue, which was formerly placed in New Palace Yard, but which has been removed to the farthest recess of what is now called St. Stephen's Square, seems to look with an air of distant and scarcely recognising curiosity, which the original might wear if he returned to earth, at the Houses of Parliament, so changed in their exterior aspect and in their inner furniture, in men and manners, since Canning knew them; and at the group of lesser statesmen, Peel, Palmerston, Derby, Beaconsfield, which until their turn shall come to be thrust back occupy the foreground from which Canning has retreated.

The bitterness of feeling which Canning had roused in his lifetime survived him. Though he had never lived ostentatiously, and had shunned what was ordinarily called society, the expenses inseparable in those days from office had impaired the fortune which he had received with his wife. His personal property at his death was sworn under 20,000*l.*, and it was believed

to be very much below that sum. It was proposed that an annuity of 3,000*l.* should be settled in succession upon his two surviving sons. The proposal was attacked in the House of Commons with an acrimony of disparagement greater than that which Canning himself had deprecated in the case of Pitt. One gentleman, Mr. Bankes, one of the party called the Saints, the leadership of which Wilberforce had once invited Canning to take, thought it becoming to propose that the expenses of the battle of Navarino, which had been fought two months after Canning's death, and of the Mediterranean fleet should be charged to Canning's family. After two days' debate the annuity was voted. The elder of the two surviving sons, a captain in the Navy, died in the year following his father's death, being drowned while bathing at Madeira. The second was the Governor-General of India during the Mutiny. Canning's widow, who survived him ten years, was created a Viscountess. Her son was raised to an earldom in recognition of his services in India. With his death the male line of George Canning became extinct. Canning's only daughter married the late Marquis of Clanricarde, afterwards a member of one of Lord Palmerston's Cabinets, and it is in the veins of her descendants only that the blood of Canning still runs. Among them are the present Marquis of Clanricarde, who has added the name of Canning to the family name of De Burgh, and the Countess of Harewood, the Countess of Cork, and Lady Margaret Wentworth Beaumont, the grandson and the granddaughters of the statesman. Since the death of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the Anglo-Irish family which

gave birth to the great diplomatist, and the greater statesman, has been represented by the Barons Garvagh of Ireland. The Cannings of Foxcote, in Warwickshire, survived in male representatives until the middle of the present century, one of them being, in contradiction to the politics of his illustrious kinsman, an ardent parliamentary reformer in 1832. The family merged in heiresses, one of whom married Mr. Philip Howard, of Corby, in Cumberland, and another Mr. Gordon, of Milrig, who added the name of Canning to his own.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ORATOR AND STATESMAN—IN PRIVATE LIFE.

THE place of Canning among parliamentary orators is difficult to determine. Contemporaries differed about it, and later critics have shared their differences of opinion. Sir James Mackintosh reckoned him, in many respects Pitt's superior. Wilberforce, however, though full of personal liking for the man, says that he never drew you to him in spite of yourself, and Lord Brougham expresses the same opinion. 'An actor stood before us—a first-rate actor, no doubt, but still an actor, and we never forgot that it was a representation we were witnessing, not a real scene.' On the other hand, Sir George Cornewall Lewis thinks that Canning as an orator has never been surpassed, and doubts whether he has ever been equalled among English statesmen. It is difficult to judge of Canning's eloquence from his printed speeches. In preparing them for the press he added and altered to excess, requiring a second and third revise. The printers found it easier to reset the matter from beginning to end than to introduce his corrections. Some of these corrections showed a false taste, worthy of Lily and Florio, or their fictitious counterparts in 'Love's Labour's Lost.' Canning was almost literally

afraid to call a spade a spade. A catspaw became 'the paw of a certain domestic animal;' so, for some mysterious reason, a 'Quixotic' undertaking became 'an enterprise romantic in its origin and thankless in its end, to be characterised only by a term borrowed from that part of Spanish literature with which we are most familiar.' The nearest parallel to these improvements is to be found in the suggestion of the alderman that Canning should substitute for the words 'he died poor,' in his inscription on the monument of Pitt in the Guildhall, the more delicate expression, 'he died in indifferent circumstances.' The correct instinct of the orator was overpowered by the false taste of a man of letters trained in an artificial literary school.

Canning's preparation of his speeches was in his later years at least as elaborate as his revision of them in print. At the beginning of his parliamentary career he seems to have been more confident or careless. But, as has been the case with later orators, the weight of a reputation to sustain, and of responsibility for the moulding of opinion, pressed upon him and depressed him. He was uneasy for three or four days when the speech was forming itself in his mind, and at these times, as his private secretary and political apologist, Mr. Stapleton, testifies, it was unsafe to approach him on any matter not bearing upon the discourse which was shaping itself within him. He was taciturn and moody as he went down to the House. The speech once delivered, he recovered his gaiety. Canning did not write out his speeches, but he jotted down the heads on which he intended to touch with great minuteness of subdivision and in the order of treatment, and he took

the paper containing these memoranda to the House with him, and spoke from it. Sometimes the heads of the speech, carefully numbered, amounted to between four and five hundred. The following are a part of the memoranda for a speech against a motion of Mr. Lambton's for Parliamentary Reform, which the accidental and premature 'drying up' of Mr. Vansittart prevented Canning from delivering:—

391. But in or out of office.
392. The Constitution is my object of worship.
393. And in this her temple.
394. For that obloquy.
395. For that demonstration.
396. For that designation, and pretty well know by what pen, to the dagger of the assassin.
397. But let it pass; the danger and the scorn.
398. Let them rail, or let them repent.
399. My cause is the same.
400. And while I have the strength, I desire no other duty than that of doing my best in defence of a form of Government which, if destroyed, could not be replaced, and which may yet afford shelter and glory to generations who will know how to value and preserve it.

Canning does not appear, so far as can be judged from the extracts of memoranda for his speeches which have been published, to have put down the good things which he intended to say, the seeming impromptus, the epigrams, the illustrations, the declamatory passages or the passages of sustained banter by which they are now chiefly remembered. For the form and the manner of introduction he seems to have trusted to the chance of the moment. In this he was unlike Sheridan. Before

Sheridan ventured to tell Dundas that he took his facts from his imagination and his fancies from his memory, he had tried the saying, with proper adaptation, on a wine merchant, and it appears in two or three tentative forms in his note-book. Canning's wit seems really to have sprung voluntarily out of the circumstances of the debate, and not to have been dragged by a sort of conscription or press-gang into forced service. His theory of parliamentary speaking was sound. 'Speaking,' he told Mr. Rush, who was American Minister in England during Mr. Canning's second tenure of the Foreign Office, and who fortunately published a journal of his residence at the Court of St. James's, 'must take conversation as its basis rather than anything studied or stately. The House was a business-doing body, and the speaking must conform to its character; it was jealous of ornament in debate, which, if it came at all, must come as without consciousness. There must be method also, but this should be felt in the effect rather than felt in the manner; no formal divisions, set exordiums, or perorations, as the old rhetoricians taught, would do. First, and last, and everywhere you must aim at reasoning, and if you could be eloquent you might at any time, but not at an appointed time.' Canning's practice in the main conformed to his theory. His speeches were always argumentative speeches. Lord Holland called him the first logician in Europe, and there is probably a nearer approach to truth in this statement than there is in Sir George Lewis's recognition of him as the greatest of English parliamentary orators. The common idea that Canning's eloquence was of the imaginative and sportive rather

than of the reasoning order is due to the fact that the fancy and the wit grew too copiously out of the argument, and that many minds which could not follow the one were capable of being tickled and diverted by the other. The faculty of exact thought, and the mastery over long and difficult processes of reasoning, which formed the foundation of Canning's intellectual character, were exhibited in their naked simplicity in the speech on the Bullion question, which Lord Brougham held to be the most masterly Canning ever made on any subject, and the most masterly any one ever made on that subject. The same characteristic marks his purely political writings. His despatches during his second tenure of the Foreign Office laid down and vindicated the lines of his European policy with a masculine simplicity of form and grasp of principle which make them not less classics of international statesmanship than the judgments of Lord Stowell are classics of international law.

It is impossible to illustrate by examples a chain of reasoning, or effectively to exhibit a principle separated from the circumstances in which it is to be applied. But the wit and humour with which Canning enlivened the debates, and the imagination and fancy with which he elevated and adorned them, do admit of being exhibited without being extinguished by the detachment. In March 1824 a debate took place, on the motion of Lord John Russell, with respect to the evacuation of Spain by the French army, and a question arose as to the conduct of some Englishmen, Sir Robert Wilson, Lord Nugent, and others who had volunteered for service with the Spanish patriots. Lord Nugent,

who belonged to the House of Buckingham, had more than a younger son's or brother's portion of the corpulence which marked the Grenville family, and especially the 'Phat Duke,' as Canning loved to spell him. Canning relieved an elaborate argument on international law and the obligation of neutrality by a narrative of the adventures of Lord Nugent. After describing Sir Robert Wilson as no small breach of neutrality, and speaking of Lord Nugent as a most enormous breach of it, he went on :—

It was about the middle of last July that the heavy Falmouth coach (loud and long-continued laughter)—that the heavy Falmouth coach was observed travelling to its destination through the roads of Cornwall with more than its usual gravity. (Loud laughter.) There were, according to the best advices, two inside passengers (laughter)—one a lady of no considerable dimensions (laughter), and a gentleman, who, as it has been since ascertained, was conveying the succour of his person to Spain (cheers and laughter). I am informed—and, having no reason to doubt my informant, I firmly believe it—that in the van belonging to the coach (gentlemen must know the nature and uses of that auxiliary to the regular stage-coaches) was a box more bulky than ordinary, and of most portentous contents. It was observed that, after their arrival, this box and the passenger before mentioned became inseparable. This box was known to have contained the uniform of a Spanish general of cavalry (much laughter) ; and it was said of the helmet, which was beyond the usual size, that it exceeded all other helmets spoken of in history, not excepting the celebrated helmet in the 'Castle of Otranto' (cheers and laughter). The idea of going to the relief of a fortress blockaded by sea and besieged by land with the uniform of

a light cavalry officer was new, to say the least of it. About this time the force offered by the hon. gentleman, which had never existed but on paper, was in all probability expected. I will not stay to determine whether it was to have consisted of 10,000 or 5,000 men. No doubt upon the arrival of the General and his uniform the Cortes must have rubbed their hands with satisfaction, and concluded that now the promised force was come they would have little more to fear (laughter). It did come, as much of it as ever would have been seen by the Cortes and the King; but it came in that sense and no other which was described by a worthy nobleman, George, Duke of Buckingham, whom the noble lord opposite (Lord Nugent) reckons among his lineal ancestors. In the play of 'The Rehearsal' there is a scene occupied by the designs of two usurpers, to whom one of their party, entering, says :—

> Sirs,
> The army at the door, but in disguise,
> Entreats a word of both your majesties.

(Loud and continued laughter.) Such must have been the effect of the arrival of the noble lord. How he was received, or what effect he operated on the councils and affairs of the Cortes by his arrival, I do not know. Things were at that juncture moving too rapidly to their final issue. How far the noble lord conduced to the termination by plumping his weight into the sinking scale of the Cortes is too nice a question for me just now to settle. (Loud cheers and laughter.)

Mr. Canning then proceeded soberly with his argument as to the impossibility of allowing individuals to carry on a private war with governments with which their own is in amity. But the impression was probably made on not a few Sir Johns and Sir Thomases

that the whole thing was a joke, and Canning only a very good joker of jokes.

Of Canning's eloquence in its loftier moods, one or two passages have become the commonplaces of rhetorical extracts. The most celebrated, perhaps, is that in which, in the speech of December 12, 1826, he defended his policy in not going to war with France against her invasion of Spain, and in recognising the independence of the Spanish-American colonies :—

> Is the Spain of the present day the Spain of which the statesmen of the times of William and Anne were so much afraid? Is it, indeed, the nation whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, sir, it was quite another Spain—it was the Spain within the limits of whose empire the sun never set; it was Spain with the Indies that excited the jealousies and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors. . . . If France conquered Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No, I looked another way: I sought the materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.

Perhaps these sentences belong to the things which, though 'finely thought,' are 'superfinely said.' There is, moreover, a certain tone of egotism, as if Canning had absolutely created the American continent in recognising Spanish-American independence and by sending out consuls to South American ports and ministers to South American capitals, and making commercial treaties. Carlyle describes a picture of Maupertuis, who

discovered the flatness of the earth at the poles, with his hand upon the globe, 'comfortably squeezing the earth and her meridians flat (as if he had done it) with his left hand; and with the other, and its outstretched finger, asking mankind, "Are you not aware, then?"' Perhaps there was something in this assumption to have created what he recognised—though in diplomacy recognition is sometimes creation—which assimilates Canning's attitude to that of Maupertuis. He seems to stand with his hand on the globe, pointing to South America, as if he had literally called it out of the deep and bid the dry land appear. The phrase and the posture are theatrical. But the momentary impression probably was greater than any that has ever been made in the House of Commons. One who was present says it was terrific:—

> It was as if every man in the House had been electrified. Tierney, who before that was shifting in his seat, and taking off his hat and putting it on again, and taking large and frequent pinches of snuff, and turning from side to side, till, I suppose, he wore his breeches through, seemed petrified, and sat fixed, and staring with his mouth open for half a minute! Mr. Canning seemed to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic. I remarked his flourishes were made with his left arm; the effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded, his nostrils dilated, a noble pride slightly curved his lips, and age and sickness were dissolved and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius; all the while a serenity sat on his brow that pointed to deeds of glory.

The occasion was an exception to the rule—if it was the rule—stated by Wilberforce and Brougham—

that Canning failed to carry his audience with him. But it does not seem to be an exception to Brougham's statement that Canning never forgot himself. The 'I' —the 'adsum qui feci'—is very prominent in it. The theatrical character of Canning's eloquence is conspicuous. The electrical effect suggests the triumphs of the stage rather than of the Senate—the pit rising at Kean in Shylock rather than Parliament carried away unresisting and spellbound by the rush of Fox's rapid and impassioned reasoning.

An even finer passage, and one in which there is less of the first person singular—more of England and less of Canning—is that in which, in a speech delivered at Plymouth in 1823, he illustrated the quietude in repose which seems the contradiction, but is yet the guarantee, of strength in action:—

> Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town is a proof that they are devoid of strength and incapable of being fitted out for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness—how soon, upon any call of patriotism or necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated being, instinct with life and motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage! How quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as one of those magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself, while apparently passive and motionless, she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion.

In the physical qualifications of oratory, Canning probably has never had an equal among English statesmen. His style and manner may not incorrectly be described as intermediate between that of Pitt and that of Fox, and his mind and temper lay in a mean between theirs. Pitt's intelligence, like his figure, was linear—length without breadth—projecting itself forward in a narrow channel of thought. His gestures, stiff and angular, were like those of a marionette, and his hearers seemed to feel the shock of the jerking wires. As he turned round to his supporters to invite their cheers, he looked, someone has said, as if he were moving on a pivot. He thought in precise and logical alternatives, which seemed a sort of common form provided for the reception of any kind of matter. Fox's corpulence, his black and beetling brows, his ungainly attitudes, his unmanageable voice, now rumbling bass, now shrill treble, his ungraceful movement, swaying and tossing to and fro, his lack of fluency and of order in speech until the impulse of conviction and the force of logic drove him forward—made him in every respect the direct contrast of the mechanical and automatic regularity of Pitt. His instantaneous perception of all the aspects of a question, if not for purposes of action yet for purposes of debate, his intuition, which seemed to see in one glance the whole of which Pitt thought out a part in succession and in logical forms, embarrassed him at first and made his speech confused, until order introduced itself into the thronging crowd of ideas and arguments which bore along with it, as in a current steady in its flow though stormy on its surface, the convictions and feelings of his audience. Canning's oratory

had neither the mechanical regularity of Pitt's nor the disordered force of Fox's; it fell short in power of either—wanting the majestic self-command and dictatorial authority of the first, and the rush and sweep of the second. But it was more varied. His demeanour was equally remote from Pitt's unbending rigidity and Fox's want of control. Canning's presence was striking. He was of commanding height, and though with a little tendency to looseness and weediness of figure, well if slightly built. His bearing was elastic—alert in movement, in repose full of grace. Every feature spoke, flashing thought and feeling upon his hearers in advance of the words. His articulation was delicate and precise. His voice, clear and penetrating, though a little veiled, lent itself to every emotion of indignation, of pathos, of drollery; and the curl of the lips and the glance of the eye interpreted the voice. He hesitated a little in the beginning of his speeches. When animation became excitement, his gestures were the reverse of impressive, consisting of an alternate movement, awkward and vehement, of the two arms, accompanied by a sounding and, it seemed, sometimes bruising slap on the table before him. His return to a quieter mood was marked by folding his arms across his breast—the attitude in which he is painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Canning was a careful observer of the temper of the House of Commons, carrying into this study the minuteness and patience which he showed in all his pursuits. At times he would sit with hat slouched over his face, keenly noting every incident of a long debate. But some little time before speaking it was Canning's

habit, Sir Robert Peel said, to lounge into the lobbies and listen to the conversations to which the previous course of the debate had given rise, and to pick up, as the phrase is, the general sense of the House, which, when his turn came to speak, he set himself to express or to combat. Yet, with all this desire to put himself into relations with it, he was worsted in succession by Perceval and Castlereagh in his contest for the leadership; and when Castlereagh's death left the post free to him, he practically yielded it to Peel and Robinson, whose authority and influence with the Tory party were greater than his own. The fact that during the last five years of the Liverpool Administration Canning was absorbed in foreign affairs, while Peel as Home Secretary, and Robinson as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had naturally more concern with the domestic topics which mainly engage the House of Commons, had much to do, probably, with this virtual abnegation of the leadership on Canning's part. The suspicion and dislike of Eldon and Wellington, who monopolised between them the legal, ecclesiastical, and military patronage of the Crown, and who preferred to communicate with Peel, must also be taken into account.

The genuineness of Canning's Toryism was distrusted; he was believed to be an intriguer and self-seeker. He was gravely suspected of meditating a desertion from the Tory party, and preparing for a coalition of himself and his followers with the Whigs. His colleagues complained to Lord Liverpool, it is said, of the advances which Canning was always making to the Opposition, and of his efforts to ingratiate himself with its younger members by compliment, encouragement, and

advice. But, above all, it was the flavour of contempt which ran through Canning's mind, and was impressed on his speech, that alienated men. The House of Commons is not, and never has been, jealous of superiority. It recognises it and welcomes it; it is proud of it as a possession of its own; but it resents a too conscious superiority. It was irritated by little impertinences of manner and phrase, certain scornful carelessnesses by which, probably, Canning meant nothing, and of which he was not even aware. Richard Sharp said of him that, up to a certain time, he never made a speech without making an enemy. Yet he endeavoured, and to some extent succeeded in the effort, to restrain himself. Sir T. Fowell Buxton, who used sometimes to sit near him in the House of Commons, said that during the debate he would keep up a current of whispered criticisms which, if introduced into a speech, would have convulsed the House with merriment, and have overwhelmed his opponent. When he got up, though he approached the dangerous ground, he kept off it. But he could not always keep off it; and this, no doubt, is what one of his candid friends meant when he said that Canning could never be a gentleman for three hours at a time. The fault is, perhaps, as much with the people who have ridiculous sides to their character, as with those who see the ridiculous sides. Canning, in a word, was not intelligible to the House; his character and aims were a mystery to them, the heart of which they were unable to pluck out; and to hate what you do not understand is a common failing. Ignorance is as often the mother of dislike as of devotion.

Canning's political position has been the subject of

a good deal of controversy. In truth, he cannot properly be assigned to either of the great parties of the State. When he began parliamentary life it was as a personal follower of Mr. Pitt; so he describes his mental position in a letter written while he was yet a student at Lincoln's Inn. Even while Mr. Pitt lived he had become tired of this dependence. On Pitt's death he asserted his entire freedom. His allegiance, he said, was buried in Pitt's grave, and he acknowledged no other leader. Like Chatham, and like Pitt himself in his earlier days, he especially set himself against the pretension of the two great aristocratic parties to monopolise the offices and control the policy of the State. 'To this exclusive doctrine,' he said, 'I have never subscribed. To those pretensions I have never listened with submission.' And he declared with Burke, but with more consistency than Burke, that while he had the faculty to think and act for himself he would 'look those proud combinations in the face.' Lord Holland, as has been already mentioned, told Greville that at college Canning was a great Jacobin, and hated the aristocracy—a feeling which seems always to have existed among statesmen who have lived among the aristocracy without being of them. This feeling Lord Holland implied never left Canning, and it was returned with interest, Greville intimates, by its objects. To the principle of conduct asserted at the beginning of his political career, and reasserted with emphasis during its course, he was true to the last. In the last year of his life, while he was engaged in the formation of his Ministry, Mr. Croker sent him a list of great Tory lords, with a statement of the votes

they commanded, and urgent advice to come to an understanding with them. Canning was indignant. If the King, he said, was to be considered as completely 'in the hands of the Tories as George II. was in those of the Whigs, then George III. had reigned and the two Pitts had administered the Government in vain. Against these pretensions he relies not merely on the Crown, but on the body of the people. 'And whether in or out of office,' he adds, 'I will not act, as I never have acted, as the tool of any confederacy, however powerful, nor will I submit to insult, without resenting it to the best of my poor ability, from any member of such confederacy, be he who he may.' As to the votes which the Tory peers command, Croker's list requires a commentary, and in the spirit of a modern financial reformer he asks Croker to 'add to these names the price that the Government pays for their support in army, navy, church and law, excise and customs, &c., and then calculate what number of unconnected votes the same price substituted among others would purchase if the Crown were free.'

Great aristocratic parties are seldom disposed to recognise the claims of others than those who belong to them by birth, or who are content to place themselves at their disposal, and to serve them humbly for recognition and for hire. Canning never accepted this position. He asserted himself, and he was called an adventurer. He endeavoured to promote his own interests by personal arrangements and combinations, and he was charged with intrigue and treacherous machinations. Occasionally, perhaps, self-assertion became self-seeking, and he advanced to his aim by

indirect and secret paths. But he was never a flatterer of any great chief—not even of Pitt; he did not conceal his contempt for birth without brains, and the arts of social courtiership were not practised by him. He kept his social gifts and charms for his own house and his friends, and did not hire them out for the entertainment of the nobility and gentry. To his resolution to assert himself, and to be independent of chiefs and parties, may be attributed in part at least the personal misunderstandings and jealousies which accompanied him through his political life.

It would be difficult to extract from Canning's speeches or to see in his career any consistent scheme of partisan doctrine. The opponent of parliamentary reform and of the removal of Nonconformist disabilities cannot be called a Liberal; the advocate of the Roman Catholic claims, the antagonist of the Holy Alliance, the promoter of Free Trade cannot be called a Tory. Lord Beaconsfield once said that, while the Tories are a national party the Liberals are a cosmopolitan party. Like most sweeping assertions, the phrase extends into a false historic generalisation, a statement which at the most had a momentary truth of description. Among Whig chiefs, Chatham, Palmerston, and Russell were essentially national. The younger Pitt, in spite of his war policy, Peel, and Aberdeen were, in a certain sense, cosmopolitan. Canning represents the intensest form of national feeling. He was above all things an Englishman. To him a man is an Englishman or a Frenchman first, and anything and everything or nothing else afterwards. His character is formed by his native tongue, with its associations and suggestions,

by the historic traditions which he has inherited, by the institutions which he sees about him and which give shape and direction to his life. These things are sacred. When you strip them off you get something as unreal as Arbuthnot's abstract idea of a Lord Mayor apart from his ring, his gown, his coach, his stature, his hair, eyes, and anything else that is his. Each nation has its own law of life, good for itself, bad for any other. *Spartam nactus es: hanc exorna.* For this reason Canning, while welcoming national uprisings against foreign or external domination in Spain, in Greece, in South America, objected to the propaganda by pen or by sword of French principles and ideas in other countries. In theory, he did not contend for the suppression of French principles in France. They might be good there, though he did not think they were; but they were bad elsewhere, because they were out of relation with the existing moral and social order, and with the traditions which have become a part not only of the general life of the nation, but of the individual life of every one in it. A *Dis*-senter, a *Non*-conformist was, therefore, in his eyes, though most unreasonably, an objectionable person—a sort of social and religious rebel, who ought not, perhaps, to be persecuted, but who ought not to be legally acknowledged if it can be helped. He might at best be connived at. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, at all events in a Roman Catholic country like Ireland, was a great institution moulding the life of its people, and entitled to recognition and to freedom.

The principle which made Canning the antagonist of the propaganda of French principles in Europe during

the earlier part of his political life made him during his later years in an equal degree the antagonist of the principles of the Holy Alliance, which it is his great glory as a statesman to have defeated. The Holy Alliance endeavoured to impose upon other nations principles and a law of life not their own. As Canning objected to the Holy Alliance, so he would have objected to its recent secular substitute, the Concert of Europe, which simply means the agreement of the Great Powers to inflict their will upon the small ones, not allowing them to develop according to their native forces and genius, but constraining them into such forms and confining them within such limits as suits the convenience of a despotic hexarchy of States, or of a majority of them. The country which is England at home should be England abroad, reserving all its freedom of action. Canning's foreign policy, which was for 'Europe' to read 'England,' and to 'get rid of Areopagus and all that,' was sound and statesmanlike, and abundantly justified in its results.

Viewing the political institutions which he found in existence as the shelter and organs of the national life, supplying the channels through which it flowed and inseparable from it as the body of the spirit, Canning was jealous of any attempt to touch them, and was, therefore, an anti-Reformer. But he did not object to parliamentary reform on this ground only. The tendency of the doctrines preached by the parliamentary reformers, he said, 'is not to make a House of Commons such as in theory it has always been defined—a third branch of the Legislature—but to absorb the legislative and the executive powers into one; to create an imme-

diate delegation of the whole authority of the people, to which practically nothing could, and in reasoning nothing ought to, stand in opposition.' Perfectly true; what Canning foresaw has come to pass. The three powers in the State are now the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the Commons. A truer enumeration might reduce them to two—the Prime Minister and the Caucus. The authority, not of the Crown only, but of both Houses, is declining. There is little now to prevent a demagogic dictatorship surprising the country into decisions which it may take in one Parliament to repent in the next. The need of the age is to restore or supply elements which shall not contradict public opinion, but which shall give it time to mature itself, and to chasten momentary impulse into deliberate conviction. Probably Canning would not have dissented from this doctrine if the issue had been near enough to engage his statesmanship. The one check he would not tolerate was an oligarchical domination. When he was preparing to go to India, he told Lord Holland that he saw that reform was inevitable, that he was glad to be away while the question was being mooted, but that if he had any hand in it he would let those gentry (the Whig aristocracy) know that they should gain nothing by it. According to another version of the same story, he told Lord Holland that, if the settlement of the Reform question should fall upon him, he would give the Radicals a dose too strong for their stomachs, adding that the break-up of the Whig and Tory parties, which he foresaw as the result of the struggle, would give him a position of advantage such as he never had before. Both those versions of Canning's

language are given on the direct authority of Lord Holland. Frere protests that Canning, though not a parliamentary reformer, was in other respects a true reformer hindered by incompetent colleagues. Asked by Frere what had become of the Liberal measures which Pitt and he had contemplated, but of which the Whigs claimed the credit, Canning pointed to his colleagues: 'What can I churn out of such skim-milk as that?'

In the Cabinet, on the testimony of the Duke of Wellington, Canning was habitually silent, possibly because, having made up his mind, and being determined to take his own way, and having a not very respectful estimate of the abilities of his colleagues, he did not care to talk to them. He could not, however, according to the Duke, bear the slightest contradiction or difference of opinion, and to avoid outrageous outbreaks the Duke found it necessary to hold his own tongue too. Lord Liverpool was the chief sufferer both from Canning's tongue and Canning's pen, and used to recognise his handwriting with a pang of apprehension. As to his despatches, where one would have thought his literary sensitiveness would have shown itself, he was very patient, allowing them to be criticised and pulled about with the utmost good nature. The Duke of Wellington, against life-long evidence, represents him as the idlest of men; Greville describes him as never having a moment unoccupied. His power at once of concentrating and dividing attention was so great that he could dictate simultaneously three despatches to three secretaries, speaking faster than they could write.

Whatever his failures of temper in the Cabinet and

in the House of Commons, he was a courteous and deferential host. On the death of the Duchess of Gloucester, in 1807, the year in which he became Foreign Secretary, Canning purchased Gloucester Lodge from her daughter, the Princess Sophia. The house stood about two miles from London, as London then was, between Brompton and Kensington, in a spot known as Florida Gardens. It had formerly been known from the name of the Duchess, and from the Italian style in which it was built, as Villa Maria. The Florida Gardens were a sort of minor Ranelagh, intermediate between that place and town, before they became the site of Gloucester Lodge. Mr. Rush, then American Minister in London, describes the place in his Journal. 'The grounds about the house,' he says, 'were not extensive, but they were shut in by trees, so that when the gates were passed the seclusion was complete,' a feature upon which he remarks as the charm of many villa residences near London. He describes Canning as host, noting the cordiality of his welcome and the grace and skill with which, sitting at the head of the table, he contrived to keep all his guests in view, and, saving for an occasional flash of pleasantry, mainly directed his own conversational power to the task of drawing out that of others. He was 'in private circles bland, courteous, yielding.' The sort of restraint and subordination of himself to others which Mr. Rush noted in Canning as a host were not, according to a writer in the 'Quarterly Review,' always observed by him. The author of this article, which was published less than nine years after Canning's death, speaks of the charm of his frank, open, and cordial manner,

and of his unaffected *bonhomie*. 'Then (he adds) his fund of animal spirits and the extreme excitability of his temperament were such as invariably to hurry him, *nolentem volentem*, into the full rush and flush of conviviality. At the latter period of his life, when his health began to break, he would sit down with an evident determination to be abstinent—eat sparingly of the simplest soup, take no sauce with his fish, and mix water with his wine; but as the repartee began to sparkle and the anecdote to circulate, his assumed caution was imperceptibly relaxed, he gradually gave way to temptation, and commonly ended by eating of everything and taking wine with everybody—the very *beau idéal* of an Amphitryon.'

The last word indicates that Canning is here described as he showed himself at home; and he, as already remarked, was seldom to be seen elsewhere in society. Writing from Paris in 1826, and describing the cordiality of his reception by the King, princes, Ministers, and ultras of all parties, he adds: 'Mrs. Canning is well, and has seen more of Paris within this month than of London since she was married. For my own part, I would not run the evening rounds in London which I cannot avoid here for any consideration, whether of politics or pleasure.' In fact, except on those state and ceremonial occasions which commanded his presence, Canning was seldom to be seen elsewhere than at home or in the houses of a very limited circle of friends. When Sydney Smith, in a spiteful and untruthful passage of the 'Letters of Peter Plymley,' pretends to see nothing more in Canning than 'an extraordinary writer of small poetry and a diner-out of

the highest order,' inferior only to George Selwyn or Tickell during the last half century, he is, what Sydney Smith seldom was, ridiculous. Peter Plymley sinks almost to the level of Peter Pindar. Mr. Rush describes Canning's schoolboy playfulness when he was released from the House and from Downing Street. He had no thought of shining.

Canning's literary tastes remained with him through life. When he and Pitt met they were soon buried in some classic. His correspondence with Sir Walter Scott turned mainly upon bookish topics; and he had literature as much as politics in his mind in promoting the foundation of the 'Quarterly Review.' His political antagonism with Chateaubriand, for whom he responded at a dinner of the Literary Fund, was softened by common intellectual tastes, though, unlike Chateaubriand, he was a man of action first and a man of letters second. Like one of the most illustrious of his successors in the Premiership, he lived in—probably he could not have lived out of—an atmosphere of contention, and the noisiest brawls with Brougham or Hobhouse were more to his mind than Fox's book under a tree. Two articles in the 'Quarterly Review'—one on Gifford's 'Life of Pitt' and another in ridicule of Sir John Sinclair's bullion pamphlets—form, so far as I know, together with his verses of occasion, the complete works of Canning. In contrast with his theory, and especially with his master-passion for Dryden, his style was a little over ornate—the purple patch and the tinsel are in excess.

Of Canning in his personal and domestic relations I have already spoken, but a few last words may be

added. Wilberforce pays a surprised tribute to his moral purity. His persistent care for his mother was touchingly shown in the injunction contained in his will: 'I earnestly entreat Joan [his wife] to pay to my mother 2,000*l.*, or, what I should prefer if it can be secured, an annuity of 300*l.* during her life.' The mother died a few months before the son. His affectionate solicitude had accompanied her through life, but it was spared the need of posthumous guardianship. His devotion to his wife and children was ardent and tender. The lines with which he expressed his grief and resignation on the loss of his eldest son, who died at nineteen after a life-long malady, leave him in attitude in which friend and foe, detractor and eulogist, may best part with him:—

> Oh! mark'd from birth, and destin'd for the skies,
> In youth with more than learning's wisdom wise,
> As sainted martyrs, patient to endure,
> Simple as unweaned infancy, and pure—
> Pure from all stain, save that of human clay,
> Which Christ's atoning blood hath washed away;
> By mortal suffering now no more oppress'd,
> Mount, sinless spirit, to thy destin'd rest,
> While I, reversed our natures' kindly doom,
> Pour forth a father's sorrows on thy tomb.

To these words of peace and benediction, issuing, as it were, from the tranquil centre of a life of outer storm, I will add only a few of the memorial verses in which Frere signalised the struggles and triumphs of his friend:—

> Born with an ancient name of little worth,
> And disinherited before his birth—

A landless orphan—rank and wealth and pride
Were freely ranged around him ; nor denied
His clear precedence, and the warrant given
Of nobler rank, stamped by the hand of Heaven,
In every form of genius and of grace,
In loftiness of thought, figure, and face.
Such Canning was.

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